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ORIGINAL FABLES



PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY.



FABLES

FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS.

BY MRS. PROSSER.

"Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee." — Job xii. 7.



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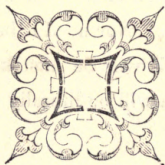
PREFACE BY THE AMERICAN PUBLISHERS.



MANY a profitable lesson in morals is best taught indirectly. A foolish act or speech will appear in its real light when attributed to one of the inferior animals, and a child may receive the instruction when he might be unmoved by direct admonition. Nor need it be feared that the true character of the fable will be mistaken; that what is the mere *vehicle* of truth will be literally received as the *truth* itself.

"I shall not ask J. J. Rousseau
If birds confabulate, or no :
'Tis clear that they were always able
To hold discourse, at least in fable ;
And e'en the child, that knows no better
Than to interpret by the letter
A story of a cock or bull,
Must have a most uncommon skull."

COWPER.



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Original Fables.

EVERY ONE IN HIS OWN WAY.

“WHAT, no farther!” said the minute-hand to the hour-hand of the timepiece. “Why, I have been all round the dial since we parted; and there are *you*, just one figure from the place where I left you.”

“And yet I have done as much work in the time as you have,” answered the hour-hand.

“How do you make that out?” asked the other, as he advanced to pass him.

“*So*,” was the reply. “Your journey all round, and mine from figure to figure, are each an hour’s value; all are not able to arrive at the same conclusions with the same ease and readiness. But this is no fault on either side; only they who fancy, because they are always in a bustle, that they are doing the

work of the whole world, are mistaken, and plume themselves on an importance and superiority by no means belonging to them. If you were to creep like me, the day would last nobody knows how long; and if I were to gallop like you, it would be over before it had well begun. Let us each keep our own pace, and then the business we are both upon will be well done between us."

"All right," said the minute-hand in the distance; "I'm nearly out of hearing now; so keep any thing more you have to say till I pass you again."

TWO SIDES TO A TALE.

"WHAT's the matter?" said Growler to the black cat, as she sat mumping on the step of the kitchen door.

"Matter enough," said the cat, turning her head another way. "Our cook is very fond of talking of hanging me. I wish heartily some one would hang her."

“Why, what is the matter?” repeated Growler.

“Hasn’t she beaten me, and called me a thief, and threatened to be the death of me?”

“Dear, dear!” said Growler; “pray, what has brought it about?”

“Oh, the merest trifle, — absolutely nothing; it is her temper. All the servants complain of it. I wonder they haven’t hanged her long ago.”

“Well, you see,” said Growler, “cooks are awkward things to hang; you and I might be managed much more easily.”

“Not a drop of milk have I had this day,” said the black cat; “and such a pain in my side!”

“But what,” said Growler, — “what immediate cause?”

“Haven’t I told you?” said the black cat pettishly; “it’s her temper, — what I have had to suffer from it! Every thing she breaks she lays to me, every thing that is stolen she lays to me, — such injustice! — it is unbearable!”

Growler was quite indignant; but, being of a reflective turn, after the first gust of wrath had

passed, he asked, "But was there no particular cause this morning?"

"She chose to be very angry because I—I offended her," said the cat.

"How? may I ask," gently inquired Growler.

"Oh, nothing worth telling,—a mere mistake of mine."

Growler looked at her with such a questioning expression, that she was compelled to say, "I took the wrong thing for my breakfast."

"Oh!" said Growler, much enlightened.

"Why, the fact was," said the black cat, "I was springing at a mouse, and I knocked down a dish; and not knowing exactly what it was, I smelt it, and just tasted it, and it was rather nice, and"—

"You finished it?" suggested Growler.

"Well, I should, I believe, if that cook hadn't come in. As it was, I left the head."

"The head of what?" said Growler.

"How inquisitive you are!" said the black cat.

"Nay, but I should like to know," said Growler.

"Well, then, of some grand fish that was meant for dinner."

"Then," said Growler, "say what you please; but now I've heard both sides of the story, I only wonder she *didn't* hang you."

WHO'D BE A DONKEY?

"Who'd be a donkey?" said a smart-looking horse that was grazing in a meadow, under the hedge of which a heavily-laden donkey was picking up a thistle.

"Who'd be a donkey?" said a cow in the opposite meadow, looking at him through the gate.

"Who'd be a donkey?" said an elderly gentleman, dressed in black, walking in a reflecting manner up the road, his arms crossed behind his back, and his stick under his arm.

"Friends," said the donkey, with a very long piece of bramble hanging from his mouth, "you'll excuse my speaking while I am eating, which is not polite;

but, in order to set your benevolent hearts at rest, I beg to assure you that *I'd* be a donkey."

"Well," said the horse, "there's no accounting for tastes. I wouldn't. Do you mean to say that you prefer your ragged pasture out there to my delicate fare in here?"

"I never tasted yours," said the donkey; "mine is very pleasant."

"Do you mean to say, friend," asked the cow, "that you prefer carrying that heavy load to living at ease as I do?"

"I never lived at ease; I am used to my burden," said the donkey.

"I should think, my poor fellow," said the gentleman, "you would be glad even to change places with your master, vagabond as he is. You would certainly escape beating and starvation. I see the marks on your poor head where his blows have been, and your ribs plainly tell what your ordinary fare is."

"Sir," said the donkey, "I am greatly obliged to you for your pity, but I assure you it is misplaced:

my master is more of a brute than I am, both when he gets intoxicated and when he beats me. I don't like beating, especially about the head; but it is a part of my lot to bear it, and when the pain is past I forget it. As to starving, there are degrees in starvation; I am many points from the bottom of the scale, as you may see by the delicate piece of bramble I was finishing when you spoke. I believe my master, who can not dine on a hedge, more frequently suffers from hunger than I do."

"Well, my friend," said the gentleman, "your philosophy is great; but that burden must be too much for you; it is twice too heavy for your size."

"It is heavy, sir; but who is without a burden? You, sir, for instance,—pardon me; not for worlds of thistles would I bring you on a par with a poor donkey,—you are, as I should judge, the clergyman of this parish?"

"Yes," said the gentleman.

"And you have a family?"

"Yes; six children."

"And servants, of course?"

“Yes; three.”

“Dear me!” said the donkey. “Sir, excuse me again; but what is my burden to yours? A parish, six children, and three servants!”

“Oh, but my cares are such that I am constituted to bear them.”

“Just so, sir,” said the donkey; “and my burden fits my back. The truth is, sir, I believe—and I would recommend you (once more excuse me) to put it into your next sermon—that half, and more than half, of our wants are created; half, and more than half, of our miseries are imaginary; and half, and more than half, of our blessings are lost, for want of seeing them. I learned this from my mother, who was a very sensible donkey, and my experience of life has shown me its truth. With neither of my friends over the hedges would I change place, scornful as they look while I say it. As for you, sir, let me tell you that a thunder-storm, which will not touch my old gray coat, will spoil your new black one; and I advise you to run for it, while I finish my dinner.”



LOOK AT HOME.

“NED, I’m ashamed of you,” said Silver, the white cow. “Really, with that clog on your leg, I wonder you attempt to mix with respectable people.”

“Your servant, ma’am,” answered the donkey. “I don’t see that I am to be blamed for it, seeing that I did not put it on myself.”

“No, no, you were not likely to do that; but if you hadn’t taken to opening the gates with your nose,

and wandering off nobody knows where, so that you could never be found when you were wanted, the master wouldn't have fettered you. You needn't look at me so boldly; it's a disgrace, and you know it, and you ought to be ashamed of it."

"I ask your pardon, ma'am," said Neddy, looking steadfastly at the nobs on the ends of Silver's horns; "but I was so taken up with looking at those things which the master put on your horns the day you broke down the hedge, and tried to toss the dog, that I did not quite hear you. Please to say it again."

But Silver walked another way, and Neddy grazed without interruption.

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS.

"THEY'RE going to hang Snap," said Frisk, my lady's Blenheim, as she stood wagging her tail with great animation on the top of the kitchen-steps, looking out into the yard.

"Well, who'd have thought it!" said Growler. "But I'm not surprised when I reflect: that was what master and the groom were talking about yesterday, no doubt; for they looked at him."

"They're measuring his neck for a rope," said Frisk, scampering off.

"Snap's going to be hanged," said Growler to Tray.

"Indeed! Well, I thought he looked very low-spirited all day yesterday. I'm not surprised at all; but are you sure?"

"Oh! I fancy he has the rope round his neck already."

"Only think of Snap!" said Tray to Lion, the Newfoundland dog.

"What about him?" said Lion, apparently more inclined to think of something else.

"Going to be hanged: that's all."

"And enough, too," said Lion. "When?"

"Oh, I doubt if he isn't hanged already: I fancy the rope was about his neck some time ago."

"Poor fellow! what's it for?"

"I can't exactly tell. The groom's been complaining of him to the master, I believe, from what Mr. Growler says."

"I thought he was a great favorite."

"Ah! but we've all seen a great change lately."

"When did you notice it?"

"I don't know that it was spoken of till this morning; but any one might have seen it long ago."

"I never saw it."

At this moment, Snap ran into the yard with a new collar on.

"Hey, what's this?" said Lion, as Snap trotted from one to another to show his finery; while Frisk looked down from the top of the steps, and whispered rather sheepishly to Growler, "Who'd have thought they were measuring him for a collar?"



THE OAK AND THE IVY.

“WILL you allow me, sir?” said the ivy to a gnarled old oak. “I won’t intrude without your permission.”

The oak looked down at his feet, which the ivy was covering, but made no answer.

“What a ragged old fellow you are!” said the ivy, when she had reached half way up the massive trunk. “I have covered knots and knobs innumerable in you: you may thank me for looking so handsome.”

“Do you think we shall sell for much?” said the ivy, as she grew up to the topmost boughs. “I see they have been marking us. I presume we are in the same lot. You are aware that you owe all your beauty to me.”

The oak was felled, and the ivy lay withered and trailing on the ground. “Alas!” she cried, “how could I so forget myself? I knew I was but ivy when I was at the bottom of the tree, but when I got to the top I thought I was an oak.”

THE CROWING COCK.

“How did I crow then?” said a cock to his favorite speckled hen.

“Magnificently!” said the speckled hen.

“I’ll get up on the gate and crow again, that all the yard may hear. You tell them to listen.” And up he flew to the top of the gate, and flapped his wings, and stretched his neck, and crowed with all his might; then, holding his head on one side, he looked down with one eye at the hens who were huddled together before the gate.

“Fine!” said the speckled hen. “Fine!” said the white hen, and the brown hen, and all the hens, and as many chickens as had not their mouths full of barley.

“Do you hear that brown thing yonder?” said he, as he strutted up and down the yard, looking contemptuously at a thrush in a wicker cage, who was trilling one of his richest songs. “What do you think of the noise it makes?”

All the hens clucked with contempt.

“Friend!” said the cock to him, “you mean well, but you haven’t a note of music,—you should listen to me;” and then he crowed with all his might again. The hens all stood on one leg, with their eyes closed, and their heads on one side, in mute admiration.

At this moment, Shock, the house-dog, came out of his kennel and shook himself, as if disturbed out of a sound sleep.

“Did you hear me crow?” said the elated cock.

“Hear you! I should like to know who didn’t?” said Shock. “There’s no peace for you, morning, noon, nor night; for the only time when you’re quiet, I’m obliged to turn out to keep you from the fox.”

The cock shook his gills, and looked very much astonished; and the hens whispered into one another’s ear.

“Ask my hens,” said the cock indignantly.

“Your hens, indeed!” said Shock. “Why, they know nothing but what you tell them; and if they don’t do as you like, you drive them from the barley.”

You're all very well to call up the maids in the morning, and to sing out when thieves come near the roost; but if you were not the most consummate coxcomb, you would never attempt to decry a thrush."

"I have wakened him out of his sleep," said the cock, in an explanatory voice, to his hens; and he led the way to the fold, where he flapped his wings and crowed again, but not with the same vivacity; and, although they were afraid of talking of it aloud, the hens noticed one to another, that he never crowed much from that day in the presence of Shock.



THE PANIC; OR, WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

"WHAT'S it all about?" said one of Mrs. Sell's ducks to her friend, as they listened to a splashing noise in the little brook dam.

"I can not think," quacked Ducky; "let's go and see."

And they sailed down the brook to the place, and found a great piece of wood which had fallen across the bank, and the water was splashing over it. The rest of the ducks, seeing these two in such a hurry to get to this spot, followed, supposing some fresh plan of operations for the day was being projected, or that a new nest of snails had been discovered. So they waddled into the brook, and swam off in the same direction.

It was difficult for their two companions to persuade them of the truth; and they all quacked so loud in their inquiries, that a hen, who was taking her ten little chickens for a morning walk, told them to remain very quiet under the wall, while she went to the water-side to see what was the matter, and to

mind and not touch the corn that would be thrown down for them, till she returned.

Whether her clucking and the increased quacking were favored by the wind I can't say ; but the sound went over the churchyard into Freek the shepherd's garden, where Drover lay dozing in the sun. He started up, pricked up his ears, and bounded across the churchyard.

A cow that was grazing in the lane, seeing him scamper at such a rate, thought it wise to follow him ; so, having filled her mouth, she walked deliberately round the corner to the place that Drover seemed to make for. In his way he saw the potter's horse standing in the Bede-House pasture. "Hey, Drover," said the horse, "what's the matter?"

"Who knows?" said Drover ; "I'm going to see. Don't you hear the noise?"

So the horse went up to the hedge of the field, and looked over on to the brook ; but, being old and tired, he couldn't make up his mind to go any nearer.

"Have you heard?" said an old crow.

"What?" said the others.

"Oh, such a noise! A fight, I should think. I saw Drover running as if to break his neck; and the old cow and the potter's horse are on the road, and I don't know who besides."

"Oh, let's go, by all means," said the crows. So they flew off, and took possession of the willows that hung over the brook.

"What fun!" said a sparrow; "the crows have gone to see some grand doings somewhere: let us go too!" and away went a whole flock of sparrows, who had been busy a minute before with the vicar's currant-bushes.

"Very remarkable!" said an old jackdaw. "What it can be about, I can not divine. I propose, my brethren, to call a meeting, and consult upon measures adequate to the occasion." And so all the jackdaws might be seen coming out of their holes in the church-tower, and ranging themselves solemnly along the ledge near the top, on the side facing the brook.

"Is it an invasion of the French?" said one. "Is it a company of masons coming to repair the

church?" said another; "that would vastly more interfere with us and our nests."

Now, just as Drover got to the brook, the two ducks having convinced their friends that there was no secret cause for their movement, the whole party were sailing calmly down the stream, and the quacking had completely ceased.

"What's it all about?" said Drover to the last of them.

"What?" said the duck.

"Why, the noise," said Drover.

"Nothing!" said the duck.

"Nothing!" said the hen, going back to her chickens.

"Nothing!" said Drover, with a mixture of contempt and vexation at having had his run for nothing.

"Did he say *nothing*, Mr. Drover?" said the old cow, who immediately proceeded to graze again.

"Nothing!" called out the old horse from over the wall. "How glad I am I didn't go any farther!"

"Nothing, nothing!" jabbered the sparrows.

"What fun! Only think of taking in all these good folks!" And off they flew to the currant-trees again.

"Nothing!" said the crows, who flew over to Mrs. Sell's yard to pick up the corn that was put for the chickens.

"Nothing!" said the daws. "How exceedingly impertinent to make such a fuss about *nothing*!"

"Very!" said Kitty Keelby's old brindled cat, who had been feasting on some of the deserted chickens, while their mother was gone to find out "what the noise was all about." And so the water went on splashing over the wood; but there was an end of the wonder.



THE OWL THAT THOUGHT HE COULD SING.

“WHAT can bring the people into the groves to hear those nightingales sing?” said an owlet to his mother.

The old owl didn’t know, and didn’t care: she was busy, watching a bat.

“I’m sure I have as fine a voice as any nightingale, and far stronger.”

“Stronger, certainly, my son,” said the owl, with a blink, for the bat had escaped.

“I shall go into the grove to-night, and give them a song,” said the owlet.

The owl opened her round eyes very wide, but said nothing.

Accordingly, when night came, and the hour for the sweet trilling of the singing-birds drew near, he flew heavily along, and placed himself in a conspicuous part of the grove, that he might be seen and heard to proper advantage.

Now the nightingales did not by any means ad-

mire the prospect either of his company or his cooperation in their concert; so those who were bent on singing sought another grove, while those who were content to be quiet for the night kept snugly at roost.

"Where can the nightingales be?" said the people who came to hear them.

Upon this, the owlet set up a hoot so loud and so long, that it nearly frightened them into fits.

"That creature has terrified them, and scared them all away," said one. "I will soon dispatch him. Where's my gun?"

But the disconcerted owlet took the hint, and before the gun came he had got back to his mother.

"Your feathers are ruffled, my son," said the owl. "Have you been singing?"

The owlet reluctantly related his disgrace and narrow escape.

"It is just what I expected, and I am glad you are safe back."

"Then why did you suffer me to go?" said the owlet indignantly.

“Because I was sure it was a point on which nothing but experience could convince you. I don’t understand music, and can not tell why people should take the trouble to go and hear nightingales sing, and at the same time shoot owls for hooting; but I know it to be a fact. There is much difference between our voices, which I can myself discern every time I hoot. Ours may be superior, for any thing I know; but as the prejudice of the public mind is strong on the other side, I shouldn’t think of disputing the point, and probably, now you have experienced the effect of your performance on their ears, you will be satisfied, with me, to leave them alone in their mistake.”



THE COMPLAINT OF THE EAST WIND.

“WHY do you shrink from me?” said the east wind, angrily, to the flowers.

The primrose, for answer, crept under its leaves; the snowdrop, bending lower, laid her head sadly on the earth; the opening buds closed again; and the young and tender green leaves curled up, looking dry and withered.

“Why do you fly from me?” said the east wind, reproachfully, to the birds.

For answer, the chaffinch fluttered into a bush; the warblers kept close to their half-made nests; the robin hid under the window-sill; and the sparrows huddled into their holes.

“Ungrateful!” howled the east wind. “Do I not fill the sails of treasure-ships that bring balmy spices, shining merchandise, and all the precious gifts of far-off lands? The gold and the silver, the gems of earth and of ocean, are they not wafted by me to these shores? Yet love never greets me. I find a

barren land and a reproachful silence wherever I come."

"Ah! my stern brother," replied the sun, struggling for a moment through a leaden sky, "read aright the reason of your reception. Who brings the piercing blast and destructive blight?—who hides the azure of the heavens, and dims the beauty of the earth?—who tries to veil me with impenetrable gloom, so that I can no longer bid the world rejoice? Is not this your work? Riches you may bring, but the gifts of your hand can not atone for your harsh voice and unloving nature. Your presence inspires terror, while it spreads desolation; and 'where fear is, love is never seen.'"



THE REFLECTIONS OF A PEACOCK.

“WHAT can the vicar be thinking of?” said a peacock that paraded the churchyard in melancholy mood. “He certainly is a man of bad taste, or he would consider me as the ornament of his parish.”

Here he took as good a survey as he could of his tail, which he then spread out, and strutted up and down the middle path before the vicarage windows.

“There isn’t a figure in the parish equal to mine. As to dress, let them show any of their fashions that come up to my plumes; and yet, as soon as I go into his garden, or even into the orchard, he sends the boy to hunt me out; nay, he raced after me himself, whip in hand. Very undignified indeed! He must be jealous; that’s it, perhaps. He has only a few scanty white hairs for feathers on his head, while I have an exquisitely beautiful coronet. Poor man! Or perhaps he thinks his family will get a love of dress by looking at me; that may be it. It can not be my voice that offends him; for I never let him hear it, as I know he is not fond of music,—except

when I am flying away from his whip. Why does he persecute me thus?" And, turning his head in every direction to show his colors, and carrying his tail with much pomp, the peacock stalked again up and down the middle path.

Now it happened that Drover, the shepherd dog, had heard him soliloquizing as he was lying on the churchyard wall; and, just raising his head, he said, "Do you really want to know?"

The peacock turned, and, half offended at being so unceremoniously questioned, answered, "Yes."

"Well, then," said Drover, "it's neither more nor less than because you eat his gooseberries." Then he put his head down and went to sleep again, or rather into a waking doze.

The peacock was much mortified by this humbling solution to the mystery. In his heart he was well aware that it was the truth; but while he knew it, he wished to cover it to the world with reasons more honorable to himself. He took care, when next he meditated aloud, to go where Drover could not hear him.

RUBY AND DROVER.

"WHAT right has a vulgar fellow like you to walk by us?" said a handsome pointer, named Ruby, to a shaggy shepherd dog, named Drover.

"The same right that you have to walk by me," answered Drover. "I suppose the road is broad enough for us all."

"Yes; but you ought to keep your distance, and not try to have it believed you are one of us."

"I don't wish any one to believe I am one of you, any more than you wish to have it thought you are one of us."

"A likely thing that I should wish to be thought one of you!" said the pointer, with a sneer.

"And why not?" said Drover. "I see no such mighty difference between us."

"Pshaw! nonsense! you are a poor plebeian cur, that has to work for his hard fare; you are a scrub, to look at; you have no other bed than a loft or a barn."

"Don't run away with idle fancies, friend," said

Drover; "I am no poorer than you. I have, of my own, four good legs and a tough hide, a stout voice and a quick eye: I fancy you have no more. Then, as to work, I have to guard the sheep from wolves, and bring them safe home to the night-fold when they have wandered, which is as honorable employment, to my mind, as running, with your nose on the ground, after a poor partridge that is hardly a bite when it is caught. My fare may be hard, but it is plentiful. I am not kept on bread and milk at certain seasons, for fear my scent should be spoiled, as you are, but get whatever is going from my master's basket all days alike. When he has meat to give, he always shares it with me. Scrub as I am, I am considered very handsome by our people; and that's all I care about. My master would not change me for you, depend on it; and as to my *bed*, what does a bed signify to one who can sleep anywhere? However, I can tell you I am not chained in a kennel, like you and your friends: I am at liberty to lie all night on the warm hearth, where I can hear if a thief should lurk on the outside."

Ruby couldn't say much; but, looking superciliously at Drover, he answered, "It's very well that you are satisfied with your condition: we are not all born to the same situation of life. I did not mean to hurt your feelings, and make you envious: no doubt you are very respectable in your way, and I am sorry for you that you are in such a condition."

"Pray keep your pity for those that want it. Let me now tell you a few things. You have left out the two great blessings of my life in which you have no share. In the first place, I am free. I know my work, and can do it: at all other times I can go in or out, run or rest, enjoy the common or the wood, sleep under the hedge, or play by the brook-side with my friends. *You* go out to your work with a keeper, or with the Squire,—mighty fine company, of course, and very genteel; but when your work is done, your pastime is over; you are kept up till you are wanted again,—no liberty for you. You go, when you go, for your master's pleasure, and never for any thing else. Then, again, you have many companions who are all as valuable as yourself, and your master

hardly knows you by sight. All his dogs together are nothing to him but *dogs*. He would sell you all to-morrow, if he heard of a better breed, or better trained set. My master is my friend; he loves me; I am his companion; he talks to me, whistles to me, and trusts me as if I were one like himself. I don't believe he would think of selling me any more than his wife or children. And I love him; I love to hear his step above-head in the morning; I love to hear him cry, 'Now, old boy!' when he goes to work; I love to watch by his coat and basket when he leaves them to my charge; I love to work for him; I love to watch for him, and I wouldn't leave him for all the sops to eat, and kennels to lie in, and gentlemen to hunt or sport with, in the wide world. Hark! I hear his voice. Good-morning; I can't stay to hear what you have to say." And off he was, with a bound, his eyes glistening with delight, and his shaggy tail tossing in the air.



BUSINESS FIRST, AND PLEASURE AFTER.

"PUT the young horse in plough," said the farmer; and very much pleased he was to be in a team with Dobbin and the gray mare. It was a long field, and gayly he walked across it, his nose upon Dobbin's haunches, having hard work to keep at so slow a pace.

"Where are we going now?" he said, when he got to the top. "This is very pleasant."

"Back again," said Dobbin.

"What for?" said the young horse, rather surprised; but Dobbin had gone to sleep, for he could plough as well asleep as awake.

"What are we going back for?" he asked, turning round to the old gray mare.

"Keep on," said the gray mare, "or we shall never get to the bottom, and you'll have the whip at your heels."

"Very odd indeed," said the young horse, who thought he had had enough of it, and was not sorry he was coming to the bottom of the field. Great

was his astonishment when Dobbin, just opening his eyes, again turned, and proceeded at the same pace up the field again.

“How long is this going on?” asked the young horse.

Dobbin just glanced across the field as his eyes closed, and fell asleep again, as he began to calculate how long it would take to plow it.

“How long *will* this go on?” he asked, turning to the gray mare.

“Keep up, I tell you,” she said, “or you’ll have me on your heels.”

When the top came, and another turn, and the bottom, and another turn, the poor young horse was in despair; he grew quite dizzy, and was glad, like Dobbin, to shut his eyes, that he might get rid of the sight of the same ground so continually.

“Well,” he said when the gears were taken off, “if this is your plowing, I hope I shall have no more of it.” But his hopes were vain; for many days he plowed, till he got, not reconciled to it, but tired of complaining of the weary, monotonous work.

In the hard winter, when comfortably housed in the warm stable, he cried out to Dobbin, as he was eating some delicious oats, "I say, Dobbin, this is better than plowing: do you remember that field? I hope I shall never have any thing to do with that business again. What in the world could be the use of walking up a field just for the sake of walking down again? It's enough to make one laugh to think of it."

"How do you like your oats?" said Dobbin.

"Delicious!" said the young horse.

"Then please to remember, if there were no plowing, there would be no oats."



THE LEMONS AND THE SODA.

"I COULD soon finish you up," said some lemons to a bottle of carbonate of soda.

"I could soon take the taste out of *you*," answered the soda.

"Let us try our strength," said the lemons.

"With all my heart," said the soda; and to work they went, trying with all their might to extinguish each other; fizz — went the lemons; fizz — went the soda; and they went on fizzing, till there was nothing of either of them left, and only a nauseous puddle showed where the fight had been.





THE BIRD WHO LOVED THE SUN.

“MOTHER,” said a young blackbird, looking out of his hole in the wall one cold winter’s day, “what has become of all the flowers?”

“They are withered and dead, my son.”

“And what has become of all the fruits, mother?”

“They are gathered and gone, my son.”

“And the beautiful flies, mother, with the colored wings, where are they?”

“Perished, all perished, my son.”

“And the creeping things, mother, that we live upon, where are they?”

“Safe under the earth, my son.”

“Oh, mother, how dreary it is, then! we have nothing at all left.”

“Well,” said the old bird, “it is dreary now; but look up at the sun that shines in the heavens,— he still remains to us, and, when his time comes to work, will restore to us the flowers and the fruits and the painted flies, and all our needful food: and therefore let us wait patiently, my son; for in him we have all things, though now hidden from us.”

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.

FRISK, my lady's dog, had a way of standing on his hind-legs and looking out of the window to see what was going on in the world without. One fine winter morning, having finished an excellent breakfast of bread and milk, and warmed himself thoroughly on the hearth-rug, he ran to his old place, the window having been opened a little to let out the

smoke. He had just settled himself, when Growler and Drover, two shepherd-dogs, met underneath the window, their coats looking dingy against the white snow, and rough and shabby with hard running, while their breath floated in thick curling clouds on the clear air.

“Good day, Drover,—it’s terribly sharp,” said Growler.

“Ay, pretty well for that,” said Drover.

“I have seldom known it to set in so bad as this so early,” said Growler.

“No, it *is* trying,” said Drover, “especially in the mornings: I can hardly feel my legs.”

“Our sheep are just frozen,” said Growler; “and as to the cows, their teeth pretty well freeze to the turnips.”

“Poor brutes! no wonder I heard old Dobbin cry out that his shed was so cold he was as stiff as the old barn-door that won’t go on its hinges. What in the world do all those poor creatures do that lie out on the common,—the stray donkeys and the gypsy horses?”

“What, indeed! It makes one’s teeth chatter to think of them.”

“Fie! fie!” said Frisk, looking down on them; “I’m sure this is most seasonable weather; what would you have? A fine, fresh, sparkling air, a bright blue sky, and a healthy crisp frost, — charming weather if you would only be sensible of it: you should try for a contented mind, friends, and recommend the same to the sheep, the cows, Dobbin, and the stray donkeys; for reflect, I pray you, it is, all of it, what they are used to, and what they may always expect.”

Frisk said all this with much vivacity, his eyes dancing with animation, and a smirk of satisfaction on his face.

“Ah!” said Drover, looking up, “have you had breakfast?”

“Yes,” said Frisk.

“Pray where did you have it?” asked Drover.

“By the fireside,” said Frisk.

“So I thought,” said Drover: “perhaps, if you knew the meaning of hard quarters and short

commons, you wouldn't be quite so philosophical. Change places with us for a few days, and then let us see what sort of a sentiment you would send to Dobbin and his fellow-sufferers."

THE MILL-HORSE AND THE RACER.

"WHAT a dull life yours is!" said a racer to a mill-horse.

"Dull enough," said the mill-horse.

"You must feel uncommonly stupid!"

"Stupid enough," said the mill-horse.

"Round and round, — round and round, — and that, day after day! No wonder your head hangs down, — why, you're just a piece of machinery, and no better."

The mill-horse didn't answer, but continued going his round; while the racer, who was tethered near, repeated his remarks every time he came within hearing.

"I'm afraid I've offended you," said the racer.

“Oh, no,” answered the mill-horse; “but my quiet life has this advantage in it,—it gives me time to think before I speak.”

“And have you been thinking while I have been talking?”

“Yes,” answered the mill-horse; “and I’ll tell you what I’ve been thinking,—you’re a very fine fellow, and I am contemptible in your sight; but I know which of us would be the most missed. Depend on this, if I and my breed were to take our departure, and no other substitutes could be found, folks would do without racing, and take you and your breed into our places.”



DROVER AND THE TINKER'S DOG.

“No wonder my master calls me sensible,” said Drover, who began to be proud of himself; “he told the farmer yesterday he wouldn’t part with me at any price, and I’m sure he wouldn’t. Well! I’ve earned my character; for, as he says, ‘I’m never idling when my work is ready;’ I never was caught worrying a sheep, as old Grawl did, when he got in a passion. I never thieve if I am left ever so long without breakfast. No: no one can touch my character; I have that to reflect on, and it gives my meal an extra relish to think I deserve it. Besides, I know my work so well! When did I ever miss finding a stray sheep, or when did I ever let a suspicious dog come near my master’s coat and basket? Why, I know a rogue at a glance; and he must have more wit than most who could take me in. Ha, ha! take me in, indeed!” and he diverted himself with the thought, as he munched his breakfast.

He was just preparing for the last bone,—the largest and the best,—when a slight noise made him

look beside him, and there, outside the wicket, sat an ill-looking, half-starved mongrel, with a ragged ear and one eye.

“It’s the tinker’s dog,” muttered Drover, “a poaching thief; what does he want, staring at me while I am eating?”

But he could not order him away, as he was on the queen’s highway.

However, it so spoiled his breakfast, that, in as polite a tone as he could manage, he begged him to understand his behavior was very unmannerly.

“Ah, sir,” said the tinker’s dog in a melancholy whine, “if you only knew what a pleasure it is to see you eat, you would not wish me to go.”

“Pooh, nonsense!” said Drover; “you won’t make me believe you care to see any one eat but yourself.”

“That, naturally, is the highest gratification; but when it is out of the question, there is consolation in beholding the happiness of others;” and the tinker’s dog began to whimper.

“Be off,” said Drover; “you are a thief and a poacher, and you know it; you are half starved, and

you deserve it; and take my word for it, if you do live in spite of starvation, it will only be to be hanged at last."

"Oh, sir," said the tinker's dog, "how very discouraging; but the truth is, I came to you for a little advice; and, however severe you may be, I will thankfully listen. Pray go on, sir, with that beautiful bone; I would not hinder you from it for a moment. I smelt it from the end of the lane."

Drover was much mollified. "Advice, indeed! How long will you follow it?" he asked.

"Only try me, sir," said the tinker's dog, giving a sly look with his one eye at the bone.

"Well, then, leave off your bad ways, that's my advice, and live honestly and work."

"Oh, sir, if I am only so fortunate as to get over this fit of hunger, I'll quite surprise you," said the tinker's dog.

"Give up fighting."

"Ah, sir," he replied, shaking his ragged ear, and turning his blind side to him, "see what fighting has done for me."

“And poaching,” said Drover.

“Poaching!” was the answer; “why, I was out all last night, and had a narrow escape from being shot. I lay close till the morning, and then, when my master found I came home with nothing, he nearly kicked my ribs in, and that’s all we had for breakfast: isn’t it time I was sick of poaching? If I could only get through this sad business, and have the countenance and advice of a respectable member of society like yourself, I should, as I said, surprise you. But as it is, I must go, after I have had the pleasure of seeing you finish a breakfast you have so richly deserved, and die in a ditch,—an example of the folly of bad ways.”

“There,” said Drover, quite overcome, and standing away from his best bone, “you may have it.”

“Oh, impossible!” said the tinker’s dog, wriggling through the fence and seizing the bone, with his one eye fixed on Drover, as full of admiring gratitude as it would hold.

“You can be quick,” said Drover, who was still hungry, and — while he heard the tinker’s dog eat-

ing, for he didn't look at him—couldn't help wishing he had come for advice when his breakfast was over.

"Ah, sir," said he, with his mouth full of gristle, "you have saved my life. Such a bone! believe me, I shall never forget it."

"Well, then," said Drover, "now let me tell you what I think of your way of life."

"You have told me," said the tinker's dog, licking his lips and looking toward the fence.

"Well, but how to mend it," said Drover, in some surprise at his altered tone.

"You have mended it wonderfully with that bone," said the tinker's dog. "I am quite another thing;" and he made for the fence.

"Ay, but you wanted some good advice," said Drover, discomposed.

"Quite a mistake of yours," said the tinker's dog, who had now wriggled himself through. "I wanted some breakfast, and I knew very well the way to get it was to ask for advice. Sensible as you are, I can see farther with one eye than you can with two. But, not to be ungrateful for that excellent bone, let

me give *you* a piece of advice. Never trust repentance that comes from a hungry stomach, nor take compliments from a beggar ;” and away he ran.

“I hope my master won’t hear of this,” said Drover, looking ashamed.

MORE WINTER BEFORE SPRING.

“SPRING is coming,” said a celandine, peeping from under a hedge.

“Is it really?” said a thrush ; “then I must look after my nest. But who told you so?”

“The sun. When he came this morning, he looked so lovingly on me, that I opened at once to see him, and a soft breath of air was playing all around : besides, the violet is quite ready to show her pretty face, and I can smell her perfume even here.”

The thrush shook his head. “Is spring coming?” he said to the violet.

“Yes,” said the violet.

“How do you know?” asked the thrush.

“By the soft dew that hung on me this morning, which the sun kissed away. Wait till to-morrow, and you shall see all my buds open.”

“Is spring coming?” said the thrush to a daisy, that showed her bright round face on the turf.

“No, I think not,” said the daisy; “not yet.”

“How so?” said the thrush; “celandine and violet assure me it is.”

“Celandine and violet are young and inexperienced,” said the daisy. “I have weathered the winter, and know well that it is not over. The sun kissed me; and the south wind blew at Christmas; but I knew full well it was not to be depended upon; and, although he was kind this morning as he was then, and a breeze just as gentle blew, winter is not past, — take my word for it.”

The thrush told the celandine and violet what the daisy said.

“Mere croaking,” said celandine.

“Some people are given to forbode,” said the violet.

The thrush hopped about: he wished to believe them, but couldn't help thinking the daisy was right.

That night a sharp frost set in, and killed the celandine and the violet, and a deep snow soon buried them. The thrush could hardly find a hip or a haw for his dinner. When the snow melted, the daisy was there on the turf. The sun was shining and the south wind blowing; the thrush, half starved, was pecking about for worms.

"You'll believe me now, won't you?" said the daisy. "Take my advice, and don't begin to build yet: there will be more winter before spring comes."

The thrush hopped over the graves of celandine and violet, and sang a little twittering requiem, and then flew back to his hole to wait for building-time.



HEART'S EASE.

"Be a rose," said the rose to a little fairy, who wanted to change herself into a flower. "I am the queen of the garden: look at my exquisite color; smell my matchless perfume; look at my form, so full, so delicately soft. Oh, be a rose!"

"Be a lily," said the lily. "The rose is a beauty, and she knows it," she added in a whisper; "but I can tell you, she is very subject to blight of several sorts, and often has to be washed with tobacco-water and other odious things. Look at me;" and she proudly bent her head to show her golden ornaments.

"Be a dahlia," said the dahlia: "the lily is well enough; but the snails are so fond of her leaves, that she often sits awkwardly on a bare stalk, top-heavy. Look at my velvet face, so correct in its form, so rich in its texture. Oh, be a dahlia!"

"Be a convolvulus," said a brilliant azure and crimson and purple-blossomed one that was climbing

up some trellis-work : "dahlia is as stiff as the stick she is tied to, and she has no scent whatever. Moreover, it is whispered among the flowers that she is of low origin ; being, in fact, nothing more than a kind of potato. Look at my grace and beauty. When the morning dew hangs on my purple blossoms, and the sunbeams tremble in it, I am glorious to behold."

The fairy stood irresolute. The convolvulus had not overrated her charms ; but favorites have no friends.

An iris whispered, "You ought to know that convolvulus, with all her grace and beauty, is not to be envied, for she fades before the sun is at its hight ; and while we are still adorning the garden, there is nothing left of her but an unsightly, withered, twisted leaf."

And thus, one after another, the flowers besieged the fairy : each was the first till the rest told her tale.

"Be a pansy," at last cried out a sprightly little blossom that was perched on a wall. "Look up here, fairy ; I am never troubled with blight ; the snails

do not think me worth robbing; nobody can call me stiff; and as to gentility, my relations, the violets under the hedges, and my more aristocratic sisters that are sitting in yon flower-bed, so well dressed and shaped that I can hardly believe we are of the same family, are guaranties for my birth."

"Nay," said the fairy, "you are but a weed."

"Don't believe it," said the pansy; "I am as much a flower as any of them: ask my cousins excelsior and the emperor of Russia, in that pansy-bed, if we are weeds."

"But you have no name," said the fairy.

"Haven't I?" said the pansy. "Go to a poor man's garden and ask him my name, he'll tell you it is heart's ease; and where will you find a better than that? And why am I called so? Because it's my character: wherever I go, there I flourish. If the gardener seeds me, pots me, and pets me, I come out all velvet and gold, like yonder beauties. If the wind carries my seed to a wall-top or a rubbish heap, I do my best and come out in the same colors, though not so rich and bright. I rejoice alike in

sunshine and shower; neither drought nor rains will destroy me. I may hang my head now and then, but I always come up again. No lot is perfect; but that is the nearest to it which has heart'sease to sweeten it. Take my advice, then, fairy, and be a pansy."

"Well, really," said the fairy, "I think I will."

OUR LOTS ARE EVEN.

"Miss, miss, how comfortable you are!" said a flock of sparrows to a canary that hung in a handsome gilt cage in a conservatory.

"I hope you are the same," said the canary.

"It is a sharp frost, miss," they said, as they nestled close to the glass, "and the ground is as hard as iron; and if you'll believe us, there's nothing to be had for love or money. We've cleared the hedges; we've eaten all Miss Anne's crumbs; and there isn't a worm that is kind-hearted enough to show itself, to help us to a breakfast."

“Well!” said the canary.

“Yes, miss, it’s very *well* for you, with all that beautiful seed; but if you would just let us have a little, we should take it very kind. It’s fine to be you in that beautiful house among all those fresh flowers, feasting in plenty.”

“Friends,” said the canary, “when summer comes, the soft air, the blue sky, the flowery earth, and fruits of all kinds, with liberty of wing, and heart to enjoy them, will be yours. You may well bear the evils of your lot, the hardships of winter; nor envy me, who, though I now have plentiful food and pleasant shelter, shall have no more when you are in the fullness of delight, and nature strongly pleads within me,—Why am I not equally blessed?”



SNARLER AND DROVER.

"THE hunters! the hunters!" cried Drover to Snarler, the house-dog; and up they both were in a moment to the top of a bank, where they had a good view of them.

"How brave they look in their scarlet coats!" said Drover, quite excited; "and what horses they have! not like our old Dobbin and Cherry; and those dogs — here they come — what a pack! Well, they are worth looking at, — up to the mark to-day, and no mistake! Two — four — six; but it's no use trying to count them. If they're not proud of themselves, it's a wonder; there they go!" and he turned his head, and watched them fairly out of sight.

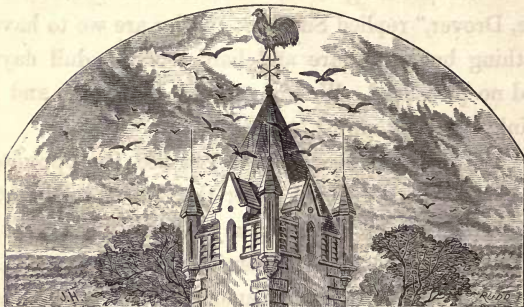
"Now that's a sight worth coming to see; it has done me good. I must be off, for it is shepherding-time. Why, Snarler, my boy, what's the matter? You don't look as if pleasure had agreed with you," he continued, as he noticed the woe-begone face of his companion.

"I was thinking of the difference of our lots in life, Drover," replied Snarler. "Why are we to have nothing but hard fare and hard work, — dull days and no pleasure? We are as good as others; and I think it is very unjust."

"Ah!" said Drover; "now you see the opposite ways we take things. I never thought of such matters while I was diverting myself with the sight; but, when you come to consider of it, you and I should cut comical figures among a pack of hounds. We are as good in our line; but then our lines are different. There must be house-dogs and shepherd-dogs; and the gentlemen will tell you there must be hounds. All right: it has fallen to our lot to be of the plainer sort. Let us be content."

"Oh that I had been a hound!" rejoined Snarler. "Didn't you feel the same, Drover, while we were looking at them?"

"Well, no," said Drover. "I thought nothing about changing places; but if I had, why, I should have felt very well satisfied to remember that *I was not the fox* just then!"



EFFECT FOR CAUSE.

“CAW! caw! what’s the matter, neighbor?” said one rook to another building in the same tree.

“Matter enough,” was the answer. “All my beautiful work, that looked so clever yesterday, destroyed by the gales that blew last night.”

“Caw! caw!” said the first, flying down to survey the ruin. “I should have been in the same plight, neighbor, if I had not been so snug in the fork of yon branch. Yours is a pleasant place truly, if you are able to keep it.”

"But I can not keep it. Three times now has my labor been in vain. All blown down. Caw! caw! caw!"

By this time many builders had gathered around the desolated nest.

"Friends," said one, sidling along a branch rather above them, "it is too bad: it is really a pity! Your hearts must have ached, as mine did, to see the ground of the avenue strewn with sticks and twigs scattered about in dismal profusion, showing what the devastations of last night were: it is high time to put an end to such evils."

"Caw! caw!" cried the rooks. "What are we to do?"

"I will tell you," said the orator. "Go to yon brazen bird on the top of the church-tower. I have noticed, that, whenever he turns his head to the willows, our nests are in danger, if they do not absolutely come down. Tell him plainly that if he will look that way, we will peck his eyes out."

"Caw! caw!" said the rooks; and, rising in a cluster and wheeling round, they soon settled on the

church-tower. The weathercock was staring hard at the north-east point, and could not see them till they had marshaled themselves on the battlements in front of him. When they had finished their harangue of complaints, reproaches, and threats, he creaked out,—

“He! he! he! Excuse me, gentlemen; but I should have given you rooks credit for more wisdom. Break your bills if you please in pecking out my eyes. When you have done, you will be in the same place that you are now. If you could manage to lay hold of the north-east wind and punish him, you would gain your end, and I would turn round with pleasure; but as that would be a difficult business, the best advice I can give you is to go back and build where he can not injure you, or else to stay building till he has done blowing.”



THE SWALLOWS.

“How provoking!” said Betty, as she stood with her long broom in her hand under the parlor window.

“What’s the matter?” said the vicar, looking out of it.

“Why, sir, these swallows!” said Betty: “four times this summer I have knocked down their nests; they *will* build under the slates just above; and they make me such work, I’ve no patience with them.”

“Four times! Are you sure they have begun again four times?” said the vicar with interest.

“Sure enough, sir; they got the start of me, and finished their nests the first time before I noticed them; then I knocked them down with the long rake, by help of the ladder; but in two days John came to tell me they had got a good way on with new ones. I soon finished them; but if they didn’t begin again that very evening!—and the next morning I had a good piece to clear away. I thought that would tire them out, and didn’t look for a time;

but right in the very same place, when I *did* look, were the two nests built up to the top. This shall be the last time, I said; and I smashed 'em to atoms, and away flew all the birds, pretty well scared. But the obstinate, perverse things won't be conquered. Here they are again, the nests more than half made. Please, sir, might John have the gun to shoot them?"

"Oh, no, Betty!" said the vicar, "by no means."

"Then, sir, I can never get rid of them."

"Don't attempt it, Betty," said the vicar, who had listened with much attention to her complaints. "Let them dwell in peace, where they have had such a trial of patience in building. I wish I may preach as useful a sermon next Sunday as their example has preached to me to-day."

Betty looked amazed. "Not knock them down, sir?" she asked in a tone of vexed surprise.

"No; don't touch them. Every time they twitter, they will remind me of the injunction, 'Faint not.' They have gained their parish, and are under my protection; so take away your broom, Betty," said the vicar, with a smile, as he closed the window.

“Ah!” said Betty, as she watched his white head disappearing; “it’s all very good, I dare say, but master hasn’t got to clean the windows.”

No, master had not; but he had trying lessons of patience with a refractory parish full of perverse hearts, and had often been tempted to cry out in despair, “It is enough; I will no longer work here; it is not my place.”

Joyfully, therefore, did he take the hint from the swallows, and determined to build on, saying to himself, “Perhaps one more season of patient labor, and, like them, I may gain my parish.”

THE SNOW AND THE FLOWERS.

“How unkind!” murmured a golden crocus as the flakes of snow fell fast and thick upon it.

“How very unkind!” said a company of seedlings that were briskly putting up their little green heads, which the soft flakes soon covered.

“How unkind!” said the bronze buds of the lilac.
“How very unkind! just as we were opening to the

sun, that shone so kindly on us!" and they complained till the fleecy burden hid them one by one.

And there was a white world. Then came the stern frost from the north, and the little fountains were sealed, and the snow over all things shone like a crystal case, and the bitter east wind raged fiercely, and all was silence except where its dismal voice was heard. But it was hushed at last, and the sun came gently forth, and the soft and genial west winds blew, and the streamlets were free again, and the crystal dissolved, and the snow beneath sank quietly, gradually, into the earth, saying to the complaining buds and blossoms and beginnings of green things, "Farewell! I sheltered you from the stern frost, I protected you from the angry blast: my work so far is done. Now I go down to soften and enrich the earth, that you may be sustained and refreshed. When you have drunk in all its blessings, and are rejoicing in fullness of strength and beauty, remember me, whom you received with reproaches and endured with impatience, and acknowledge that he is the faithful friend that works to a good end."

THE DONKEY AND THE PACK-HORSE.

"TURN the pack-horse into the field," said the farmer, "and open the hay-fence for him. I shall have stiff work for him to-morrow." So he was turned out, and tethered to the hay-fence, which was left open that he might go in and out and eat his fill.

A donkey that was in the same field came up to him, and said humbly, "Is the hay nice, friend?"

"*Friend*," said the pack-horse, kicking up his heels, "what do you mean? Know your place!"

"I ask pardon," said the donkey; "but, as the field is bare, I thought if you'd a mouthful of hay to spare,—a rough bit that wasn't so pleasant,—you might favor me with it."

"Keep your distance!" said the pack-horse, again throwing up his heels. "Do you take me for a donkey like yourself, that you think we are to eat together?"

Next day the pack-horse was taken from the field, and laden with sacks of wool till his back was ready to break.

"Friend," he groaned out to the donkey, who had the curiosity to look through the gate at him as he went down the road, "couldn't you—should you mind just carrying one of these sacks for me?"

"Dear sir," answered the donkey, "I hope I know my place better, after the lecture you gave me yesterday, when I wanted a little of your hay. I wouldn't take the liberty of attempting to share in your work, and I can assure you I've no greater wish to be a pack-horse to-day than you had yesterday to be a donkey."

THE DUCKLING AND THE WATER-HEN.

"MOTHER! mother! what's that?" said a young duck, as a water-hen swam over the brook, and ran across the orchard.

"A water-hen," said the old duck.

"Who is she, mother, and where does she come from?"

"I tell you she is a water-hen," said the old duck,

who was engaged on a fine piece of cabbage, and didn't like to be interrupted.

"Where does she come from, mother? Is she of any consequence?"

"She comes from her nest by the brook-side, child. She's not of half the consequence to me that this piece of cabbage is."

"But, mother, how does she live?"

"Dear, dear!" said the old duck, "as she can, I suppose. Do let me finish my dinner!"

"Then she has no beautiful house like ours, mother, built on purpose for her?"

"No," said the duck, with her mouth full.

"And hasn't her dinner laid regularly for her every day, as we have?"

"No," said the old duck. Upon which the young duck went up to the water-hen, and addressed her very superciliously.

"Do you know that this is our orchard?"

"Is it?" said the water-hen. "Well, I suppose I may run through it?"

"And that's our brook."

“Well, I suppose I may swim across it?” said the hen.

“You’re a person of no consequence,” said the duck.

“Quite true,” said the hen.

“Have you ever seen our house?” said the duck.

“No,” said the hen.

“We have dinner put for us regularly every day,” said the duck. “We are not obliged to hunt for it, as you are.”

“A dinner is but a dinner,” said the water-hen, “whether it’s put for you, or whether you get it for yourself.”

“Yes, but don’t you see how much more we are thought of?” said the duck.

“Yes, I do,” said the hen; “and you’ll find it out to your cost some day, when you are on your way to market, and I am snug by the brook-side. I’d rather find my own dinner, and have no value set upon me, than be pampered and petted like you, and served up at a table at last.”

THE VICAR'S PEAS.

WHAT a commotion there was on the top of the wall that over-looked the vicarage garden! All the birds, from the blackbird to the blue-tit, and even the little wren, were hopping and running and chirping and chattering in a state of the highest excitement.

"Friend Robert, have you seen it?" said the blackbird, with gravity, to a redbreast, who, in the midst of the confusion, was complacently admiring his legs.

"What's it like, Bob?" said a pert little bunting, hopping round in front of him.

"Like!" said the thrush (before the robin could answer), with a melancholy warble, "horror of horrors! Let me never behold such a sight again. I saw it from the apple-trees in the orchard."

"Let us emigrate; pray let us emigrate," said the wren, almost in fits.

"There certainly will be no remaining in such a land of harpies," said the thrush, dismally.

“What are they like? what are they like?” rose the cry on all sides. “Who has seen them nearer than from the apple-trees? Can no one describe them?”

“Gentlemen,” said a sparrow, advancing, “since no more worthy speaker comes forward, I presume to address you. I have seen them; and such a sight! This morning very early, being well aware that the vicar sowed his peas yesterday, I called my family and a friend or two to go with me, and pick up a few stray ones that might lie on the top. I have met with difficulties and dangers before now. I well remember how severely I was agitated by the vicaress’ old bonnet stuck on a stick, till I found out what it was; and it was some time before I grew used to the noise the vicar made with his gun, till it was happily ascertained that he never did any other harm than break the window with return shots; but little did I expect to encounter the horrible guard with which he has now sought to protect his peas. From side to side, from corner to corner, across and across, they stretch, red, blue, yellow, white, black,

every color under the sun. We had scarcely arrived within sight of them when the wind arose a little ; and whether it was that they rejoiced in the breeze, or were making merry at their expected vengeance upon us, I can't tell you, but they danced up and down, and turned over and over like " —

"Pray don't go on!" said the wren. "Let us emigrate directly."

There was a general feeling in harmony with the wren's proposition, and the blackbird was on the point of taking the votes of the assembly, when the blue-tit (who had no mind to emigrate from his beloved peas till he was assured of the necessity, and who somewhat suspected the sparrow's motives in thus spreading an alarm which would get rid of all sharers in the feast) inquired whether any one besides the last speaker had seen these ferocious monsters.

No one had.

"Pray," said the tit, "did you go *quite* close to them?" The sparrow confessed that he had.

"Did they attempt to bite?"

The sparrow said he did not stop to see.

"Did you get any peas?" said the blue-tit.

The sparrow, rather discomposed, replied, "Merely a taste."

"Very good," said the tit. "Friends, I am ready to head any of your number who will go with me to survey these monsters; and, if you all decline, I shall go by myself. If yonder bundle of brown feathers escaped unhurt, and got 'a taste' of the peas too, I don't see what is to hinder us from the same good fortune."

The robin, the bunting, the chaffinch, several others, and at last the blackbird, fell in with the proposal; the wren declaring she would wait in a hole in the wall till they came back again. They approached cautiously, and even the blue-tit was at first startled by some turkeys' feathers suspended on a thread and dancing vigorously in the breeze; but, his courage returning, he made a bold advance, and after a close survey of one or two of the red and blue rags, finding he came to no harm, flew back to his friends, and said, "All right! the best-tempered

little creatures in the world." And the whole party were soon to be seen hopping under and over the long lines of the once-dreaded enemy, and regaling themselves on the vicar's peas.

"John! John!" cried the vicar, "these scarecrows are of no use. I verily believe those thieves have been at the peas,—mind you load the gun to-night!" but it was of no use: very few peas did the vicar get that summer.

THINK OF OTHERS.

"How insufferable is this rain!" said a delicate Carnation to her companion: "it has affected my figure, giving me quite a bend in the back with its unmannerly large splashing drops."

"Unendurable!" was the reply, "and no necessity for it, as we are well watered by the gardener whenever we require it. My complexion will be injured; and, as to my perfume, it will be washed away."

"I dislike too much water, as is well known, at

any time ; what, then, can be the reason of this deluge ?”

Thus did the Carnations echo and re-echo complaints.

A roguish little Pansy, who had blossomed in a crevice of the wall, looked down on them, and said, “ Pardon me, ladies ; you, who are supplied with all you want by the gardener, may not feel the value of this blessed shower ; but if you grew on the wall as I do, and had nothing to expect but what came straight from above, you would not be so unjust to its worth. For many days back, I looked up at the clear sky, hoping to see a cloud. My leaves had withered, and my blossoms curled up, when these refreshing drops restored life and joy to me.”

“ Very fine,” said the Carnations proudly ; “ and are we to suffer, that a weed on the wall may be refreshed ?”

“ Nay,” replied the Pansy ; “ all in our turn, good ladies : the rain does not fall for me alone ; you are of the few that suffer from the shower, I am of the thousands who rejoice in it. If you have not the

heart to be glad in the good of so many, even at the cost of a slight inconvenience, I am sorry for you, notwithstanding all your privileges, and can not sympathize with your present complaining."

LITTLE AND GOOD.

AMONG some jars of wine of various sizes stood one considerably smaller than the rest, and it was consequently looked down upon with much contempt by its companions.

"How many are there of us in all?" asked a portly jar.

"Fifteen," cried the little one, "as *I* count."

"As *you* count!" returned the offended vessel disdainfully. "You surely don't so count as to number yourself among us!"

"And why not?" asked the little jar stoutly. "I am quite full, and what more can any of you be? I think our respectability lies in making a perfect use of our capacity, whatever it may be, and not in having a large one or a small one. But I can tell you

another thing, — the wine that's in me is three times as precious as that which you contain; so that a little of me is worth a great deal of you. Quantity is of no consequence in the value of a thing, but quality has more to do with it still."

LOOK IN THE GLASS.

"NEVER associate with pigs, my dears," said a duck to her young brood, as the sow, with her litter of ten, passed in the road. "Never associate with them, children: they are such gluttons, and such remarkably dirty feeders!"

"Well, if that isn't cool!" said the old sow, who heard the charge. "How little we know ourselves! Why, there isn't a mud-pool that you wouldn't delight to poke your bill into; and, as to gluttony, when were you ever known to stop eating, while there was any thing to eat? If you want to remember yourself, then perhaps you won't be so hard upon others."



THE SQUIRREL AND THE MASTIFF.

“WHAT an idle vagabond you are!” said a surly-looking mastiff to a squirrel that was frolicking about in the trees above him. The squirrel threw a nutshell at him. “I’ve been watching you these two hours,” said the mastiff again, “and you’ve done nothing but dance and swing and skip, and whisk that tail of yours about all the time.”

“What an idle dog you must be!” said the squirrel, “to sit for two hours watching me play.”

“None of your pertness! I had done all my work before I came here.”

“Oh, oh!” said the squirrel; “well, my work’s never done. I’ve business up this tree that you know nothing about.”

“Business indeed! I know of no business that you have but kicking up your heels, and eating nuts, and pelting honest folks with the shells.”

“Fie!” said the squirrel, “don’t be ill-tempered;” and he dropped another nutshell at him.

“To see the difference there is!” said the mastiff; “nothing but play and pleasure for you, up in the green trees, amusing yourself from morning to night.”

“Don’t envy me my lot, friend,” said the squirrel; “for, although I rejoice in the happiness of it, I must remind you it isn’t all joy. Summer doesn’t last for ever; and what becomes of me, do you think, when the trees are bare, and the wind howls through the forest, and the fruits are gone? Remember that

then you have a warm hearth and a comfortable meal to look to."

"You wouldn't change with me, however," said the mastiff.

"No; nor you with me, if you knew all," said the squirrel. "Be content, like me, to take together the rough and the smooth of your proper lot. When I'm starving with cold in the winter, I shall be glad to think of you by your pleasant fire. Can't you find it in your heart to be glad now of my sunshine? Our lots are more equal than they seem."

TRUTH NOT ALWAYS PLEASANT.

"DEAR friend!" cried the Willow, as she bent over the stream, and gazed on her graceful form reflected on the glassy surface, "how tender and how true you are! I have not a single charm that is not mirrored on your faithful bosom." And, as the breeze played gently among her branches, they bent to the stream, and kissed the placid waters.

Summer passed, and winter ; summer and winter ; and the Willow grew old. Its leaves were few and its branches withered.

“How changed you are!” she cried peevishly to the stream. “Once I never looked on you but to rejoice, for all you showed me was pleasant and full of praise. Now, when I try to bend to catch a glimpse, I turn away sad and sorrowful ; for what do you bring before me ? Not verdure, not symmetry, not grace ; but bareness, deformity, and decay. You are *greatly changed !*”

“Foolish Willow!” answered the stream, “I am *too true*,—that is my fault. There is a change, but it is not in me ; but you are not the only one that looks coldly on the truth when it offends the liking.”



THE DONKEY PHILOSOPHER.

"COME close to the hedge, Teddy," said a worn-out horse to his friend the donkey, with whom he was picking up a scanty meal by the roadside.

"Why?" asked Teddy, following with his measured pace.

"Look who's coming!" said the horse. And there passed a well-conditioned cob drawing a cart full of beans.

"How nice they smell!" said Teddy. "I should think they must be very good; but I never tasted any."

"I used to get them in my better days," said his companion, sorrowfully; "but I can never hope for them again."

"He's a happy fellow, isn't he?" said Teddy, turning his head slowly round to watch the cart going up the hill.

"Some are born to prosperity, some to adversity," sighed the old horse. And he went on to entertain the donkey with his recollections of the taste of

beans, and to draw comparisons between their condition and that of the happy cob.

Some hours afterwards, while they were yet in the road, the cart returned empty ; and, while the driver stopped to chat with a friend passing by, the horse walked up to the cob.

“Good evening, sir. Pray, what have you done with all your beans?”

“Left them behind,” said the cob.

“Well, you’re in very different circumstances from what you were when you passed us this morning,” said the old horse.

“How so?” asked the cob.

“Can you ask?” said the horse. “Were you not drawing after you a burden of rich delicacies that scented the air as you passed?”

“True, I was,” replied the cob, “but not for my own benefit. The most that I have to do with beans is to carry them for the use of others : it is seldom I get a taste myself.”

“Ah,” said Teddy to the old horse, as the cob’s master drove him off at a smart trot, “how little we

know of the truth of things! I have often envied my cousin Jack, that draws a cart full of delicious vegetables along this road every Saturday; but I shouldn't wonder if he would tell the same story. No one can eat more than enough; and, although it looks fine to have so much substance tacked to you, I dare say in most cases where we see it others get more good from it than he to whom it seems to belong."

So he buried his nose contentedly in a bunch of nettles; while the old horse stood yet in a melancholy attitude, trying to catch the last whiff of his lamented beans, of which even the empty cart had left a grateful odor.



A WORD TO THE CURIOUS.

“WHAT are the bells ringing for?” said the young colt, standing with his ears pricked up, staring eyes, and distended nostrils, and his mane and tail flying about in great agitation. “Mother, what *are* the bells ringing for?”

“How should I know?” said the mare.

But the colt took a gallop half round the field, and strained his neck to look over the fence into the road, where a cart was loading with soil.

“Can you tell me what the bells are ringing for?” he said to the fore-horse, whose nose was in his bag, from which he did not raise it to give any answer.

“Rude!” said the colt, and applied to the one behind him.

But the one behind was very deaf, and looked sleepily on the ground.

Away went the colt to another part of the fence, and saw a team coming.

“Do you know,” he asked breathlessly of the whole party at once, “why the bells are ringing?”

Supposing that he meant the bells on their collars, they merely shook them a little more by way of answer, and passed on.

"What insufferably dull animals!" said the colt, and galloped off harder than ever, till he came to the hedge that separated the meadow he was in from the vicar's orchard, in which the vicar's horse was grazing.

"*Now* I shall have it," thought he. "This is none of your stupid, low-bred creatures, but high-born and well-mannered, and sure to know all about it."

"Pray, sir, may I trouble you to inform me," he said, with much excitement, "why the bells ring?"

The vicar's horse with great gravity lifted up his head, and said, "Do you particularly wish to know?"

"I do, indeed," said the colt.

"You won't mention it to anybody?" said the horse.

"Certainly not," said the colt eagerly.

"Well, then, it's because the men pull the ropes."

"But," said the colt, rather staggered at this, "may I ask, sir, *why* they pull the ropes?"

“Ah,” said the horse, “now you go beyond me! I’ve told you all I know, and what’s enough for me might be enough for you. If you’ll take my advice, as a rule, never trouble your head about things that don’t concern you. You’ll save yourself an immense deal of trouble, and your friends too.”

THE WORLD CAN GO ON WITHOUT US.

A BRANCH, broken from the tree by the tempest, rode on the rapid current of the swollen stream.

“See how I lead the waters!” he cried to the banks. “See how I command and carry the stream with me!” he cried again.

A jutting rocky ridge, over which the torrent dashed, caught the branch, and kept it shattered and imprisoned while the waters flowed on and on.

“Alas!” cried the branch, “how can you hold me thus? Who will govern the stream? How will it prosper without my guidance?”

“Ask the banks,” said the rocky ledge. And the banks answered,—

“Many, like you, have been carried by the stream, fancying that they carried *it*. And, as to the loss you will be to the waters, don’t be uneasy. You are already forgotten, as those are who came before you, and as those will soon be who may follow.”

THE FURNACE FOR GOLD.

THE ore lay in the goldsmith’s shop, rude and unrefined. How the costly vessels, pure and polished, glittered before it!

“Ah, that I were such as you!” cried the ore. “I am gold, even as you are; but where is my beauty? where is my glory?”

“Wait awhile,” said the shining vessels: “your time will come. But, if you would really be as we are,—a lot to which you are destined,—remember not to flinch from the process that awaits you.”

So the ore was cast into the furnace, and it mourned and bewailed the fierceness of the flame.

“You were not satisfied when buried in natural dross: you are not satisfied now, while being forced to part from it,” said the shining vessels. “But when you come forth from that furnace, without blemish, ready to be wrought into a king’s crown, and take your place by us, you will forget the flame that scorched and purified you, and love the refiner, who loved you too well to keep you in the furnace one moment *less* than was necessary.”

TRIFLES! TRIFLES!! TRIFLES!!!

“Don’t,” said the pony to the flies; and he shook his head and lashed his tail about, and away they all flew.

“Don’t, I say,” he cried again, moving to another place, where he hoped he should lose them. And so he did for a minute or two, but no longer. There they were,—in his eyes, on his nose, at his ears, and all over him.

If he could have eaten them all he would, or

kicked them into the next county he would, or galloped them out of the world he would; but there was no doing any thing with them. As he moved, they moved; and, every time he attempted to graze, they settled themselves on him, or buzzed in a cloud round his head as regularly as if they had come by invitation.

“Oh, dear!” he sighed at last, “what is to be done? I can bear my master’s whip and spur; I can stand being half-worked to death over the country, and with the heavy cart,—those are evils I make up my mind to; and if that yelping cur comes behind me I can give him a reception that sends him flying; but as to these torments, contemptible as they are,—too small to be met effectually,—I verily believe they’ll be the death of me!”

Ah! so is it in human life as in pony life. Great trials can be often borne, when petty annoyances, by their number and pertinacity, vex and wear the soul.

NO ROOM FOR PRIDE.

“A NICE pass we’re come to!” exclaimed a bundle of brushwood to some fine tree-tops that were lying ready to be carted for fire-wood. The tree-tops quivered their fading leaves with contemptuous indignation, but did not deign a reply.

“Those were the days,” said the brushwood again, “when we were so gay and green. You gave a fine shade then; and as for us, my friends the thorns, black and white, made the hedges like a garden, and the bright gold blossoms of us furze-bushes were something to see. Ah, those were the days! but we must make the best of it. They’ve had us in our summer pride, and now they have got to admire us in a blaze, as they sit round their fires.”

More and more the leaves of the tree-tops quivered; and an ash, in pity to both parties, thus tried first to silence the low-born loquacious furze:—

“Friends, our union in fate should make us one in sympathy. You, like ourselves, have rejoiced in life and freedom,—like us you are condemned to the

flames; but as our beauty and dignity in life differed, so will differ the last scenes of our existence. You will but crackle under a pot, while we shall sustain a clear and steady flame."

Then, addressing his unduly sensitive companions, he added, "Nevertheless forget not that of *both* of us only ashes will remain!"

OLD DOGS AND YOUNG.

"WHAT have they brought in?" asked the old cat of Tip, the worn-out terrier, who had just been in the yard to see the game-bags emptied.

Tip, not observing Forest and Bluff, two setters, following him, took his favorite place before the kitchen-fire, and, stretching out his fore-legs, laid his nose on his paws, and said, contemptuously, "Miserable sport, hardly worth going out for!"

"Such large bags as *we* used to bring in!" he continued: "that was something like sport. Thought nothing of a dozen hares and rabbits,—scores of

'em,—and pheasants, till we were fairly tired of picking 'em up."

"Ah!" said the cat, who was nearly blind, and almost asleep, "our days were different from these. I was telling the gray kitten's mother yesterday, that, before I was of her age, I had caught as many rats as she had mice."

But Tip was not interested in the degeneracy of breeds in cats. He went on still more oratorically on the lamentable change that had taken place among dogs, and describing his own prowess in *his* day. Forest and Bluff listened quietly.

"Do but hear him," at last Bluff said: "now, wouldn't you believe he thinks there is not a dog left worth following a gun?"

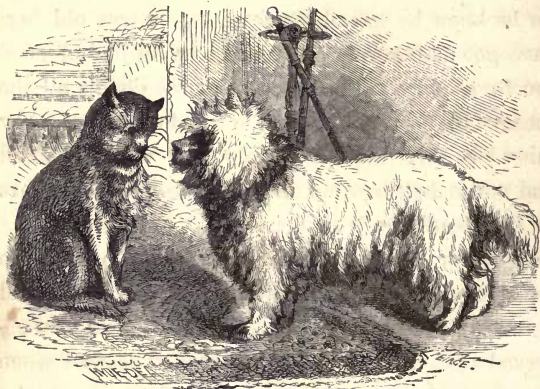
"Perhaps, Mr. Tip," said Forest, "you carried off so much game in your time, that you thinned the country, and left none for us."

Tip looked disconcerted at this discovery of having had more auditors of his boast than he had reckoned on, and, dropping his eyelids, pretended to be asleep.

“Never heed him!” said Bluff with a sly glance, for he knew he was shamming: “it’s a way old dogs have got of fancying there must be an end of good sport now they are past it. They see double all the success they ever had, and quite forget that they missed at any time. Poor old dog! we must mind and not make the same mistake, Forest, when we are in Tip’s condition.”

Whether it was the fire that was too hot, or the reflections of his two reprovers, somehow Tip found it more pleasant to change his place; and it was observed that, after that time, he looked modest when the bags were emptied, and was silent about the “doings of his day.”





DOCTORS SELDOM LIKE THEIR OWN PHYSIC.

PADDLE, my lady's lap-dog, and Tom, her favorite cat, had long entertained feelings of jealousy and envy toward each other; but at last they made it up, and agreed to be friends. Instead of snapping at Tom to make him go farther from the fire, that he might have the very front, Paddle would merely nudge him gently along, looking amiably at him at

the same time ; and Tom, though he wouldn't give way an inch further than he was obliged, made no warlike demonstrations, such as putting up his back and swelling his tail.

"I think, dear friend," said Paddle one day (not being yet quite satisfied with the deference paid to him by his companion), "we fail in showing the reality of our regard for each other in one respect."

"What is that?" asked Tom.

"We are not candid with each other as to our mutual faults. Don't you think it would greatly improve us both if we acted the part of honest reprovers to each other?"

"I don't know but what it might," said Tom.

"Be assured of it," said Paddle ; "and, that we may no longer neglect one of the most sacred duties of friendship, let us begin this very day."

"With all my heart," said Tom ; "and, that being the case, do you know I've often thought that when you"—

"Hush!" said Paddle : "every thing in order. You know, dear, I am older than you. I may say I

remember you a kitten ; so let *me* give *you* the benefit of my observations first."

"Very well," said Tom : "I'm ready."

"Well, then. First, dear," said Paddle, "you are too fond of the front of the fire, and sit in such a way before it that I am obliged to have recourse to many gentle hints before I can induce you to move. In the next place, dear, when we go to dinner, you invariably try to take the nicest pieces, which I look upon as indelicate. In the third place" —

"When will my turn be?" interrupted Tom.

"Stop!" said Paddle: "I haven't done;" and he went on to enumerate several other infirmities in Tom's character, the exhibition of which he considered in some way to affect his own comfort.

Tom, with some effort, contrived to wait it all out, and then asked, "Pray, is that all?"

"All I can think of at present," said Paddle.

"Then," said Tom, drawing himself up, "in the first place" —

"Thank you," said Paddle, interrupting him; "you must excuse my staying now. I hope you'll

improve upon what I've said to you; but I have an engagement, and can not stop any longer this time."

LINKS IN THE CHAIN.

THE blast that drove the storm-cloud across the heavens shook the oak; and the acorn-cup, loosened from its fruit, fell on the pathway.

The cloud burst; a raindrop filled the acorn-cup.

A robin, wearied by the sultry heat of an autumn day, and troubled by the fury of the storm, hopped on the path when all was calm, and drank of the raindrop. Refreshed and gladdened, he flew to his accustomed place in the ivy that overhung the poet's window, and there he trilled his sweetest, happiest song.

The poet heard, and, rising from his reverie, wrote a chant of grateful rejoicing. The chant went forth into the world, and entered the house of sorrow, and uttered its heart-stirring accents by the couch of

sickness. The sorrowful were comforted, the sick were cheered.

Many voices praised the poet. He said, "The chant was inspired by the robin's song."

"I had not sung so well, if I had not drunk of the raindrop," said the robin.

"I should have sunk into the earth, had not the acorn-cup received me," said the raindrop.

"I had not been there to receive you, but for the angry blast," said the acorn-cup.

And so they that were comforted praised the blast; but the blast replied, "Praise Him at whose word the stormy wind ariseth, and who from darkness can bring light; making his mercies oftentimes to pass through unseen, unknown, and unsuspected channels, and bringing in due time, by his own way, the grateful chant from the angry storm-cloud."



WHERE THE FAULT LIES.

“GREAT brother,” said the moon to the sun, “why is it that, while you never hide your face from me, our poor sister, the earth, so often pines in dimness and obscurity?”

“Little sister,” replied the sun, “the fault is not in me. You always behold me as I am, and rejoice in my light; but she often covers herself with thick clouds, which even *I* can not effectually pierce: and, while she mourns my absence, she ought to know that I am ever near, and wait only for her clouds to pass that I may reveal myself.”



A NEW LIGHT ON THINGS.

"HOLLOA! young fellow," said the cock to the shepherd's dog, eyeing him very fiercely as he ran by: "I have a word to say to you."

"Let us have it," said Shag: "I'm in a hurry."

"I wish to remark," said the cock, "that there has been a great mistake made in the stackyard; and you can tell your master that he and the other men, instead of turning the corn-end of the sheaves into the stack, and leaving the stubbles outside, should have done it the other way. How are my hens and I, do you think, to get at the grain, under the circumstances?"

"Any thing else?" asked Shag.

The cock was offended, and shook his wattles, but answered, "Yes: I have also to remark," —

"Never mind, never mind," said Shag, interrupting him: "you're under a general mistake, I see, and one answer will do for all your objections. You fancy that farmyards were made for fowls; but the

truth is, that fowls were made for farmyards: get that into your head, and you won't meddle with arrangements which you can't understand, and in which you and your affairs are not taken into account."

LIVE AND LET LIVE.

"Look at this brushwood, this insufferable crowd of young things about us!" said an angry oak to an aged beech.

"Ah, my lord," said the beech respectfully, "the young things like the protection of our spreading branches; and, indeed, the place is better than if there were nothing here but our massive trunks and heavy foliage: it is pleasant to see their tender forms bow and bend in the breeze."

"Pshaw!" replied the oak: "how can you tell that the place is better than it was before they came? You were but a nut when I had the place to myself, and knew nothing."

"True," said the beech; "and, remembering what

I sprang from, I can not feel aggrieved at those who, from equally small beginnings, are trying to emulate my growth. It is too long since your lordship was an acorn for you to have the same sympathizing memories, perhaps, or you would surely feel as I do."

GIVE AND TAKE.

"HEIGHO!" sighed a weary pack-horse as he stretched himself for a few minutes on the ground in a sunny pasture.

"Too tired to eat?" asked the dun cow as she sat chewing the cud.

"Rather overdone, ma'am; but a bite or two of this excellent pasture will soon restore me," said the pack-horse sleepily.

"Ah! just give you a little strength, that you may be able to work for them again,—that's the way!—such injustice and tyranny reign in the world!"

The pack-horse heard the words in his doze of a

minute or two; and, when he had recovered himself sufficiently to rise and eat, he answered after a few mouthfuls: "Oppression, ma'am, did you say? tyranny? Well, if they reign in the world, it must be a bad place; so I shall say this is out of the world, being an uncommonly good one."

"Good! for what? just to serve the purposes of those who rule over us. Here are you, worn to death, every sinew strained, your bones aching from work and blows, and not too well covered with flesh: do you suppose that you would have any food, any admission to this pasture, if it were not from a selfish regard to interest in your cruel master? And look at me: I am obliged to yield my milk without 'by your leave or with your leave,' and no thanks for it. Of course, it is simply because it makes my milk good that I am put in here; so I owe them nothing for that."

"I suppose, ma'am, you don't depend on this sweet grass in the winter? What a pity it isn't as rich and full all the year round as it is now!" said the pack-horse.

“No: we are housed at night then, and have turnips and hay, and a cabbage or two,” said Dun. “They know better than not to take care of us winter and summer.”

“Well, ma’am, I hope, for my master’s sake, I am as welcome to the good cheer he has just given me, and the tolerable quarters and accommodation I generally enjoy, as he is to my services; which I consider to be duly his, and which I feel invigorated to render cheerfully to him after this rest and refreshment. If yours gives to you with no better will than you give to him, he must suffer much from spleen; and I am sorry for him. It seems to me that the obligations on both sides are pretty equal: they don’t feed us out of pure philanthropy, and certainly we don’t serve them for nothing.”



NOT QUITE SO BAD AS REPORTED.

"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" said the gray-bird as she rested from her weary flight on a budding elm one bright, soft April day.

"Would you have believed it?" said a staid-looking thrush, lifting her head from her nest where she was feeding her young ones.

"Believe any thing of *her*," said the blackbird.

"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" cried the gray-bird, flapping her wings and tail among the boughs of the tree as she hunted for her prey.

"Oh, what times these are, when such audacious impudence is to insult the public with impunity!" said a blue-tit.

"Take care of your nests!" chirped a hedge-sparrow: "she was so civil as to leave an egg in mine last year, and I had as much work to do to feed that young one as my own brood of six gave me."

"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" cried the gray-bird as she flew hurriedly and heavily from tree to tree, with curious small birds in her train.

Whereupon there arose a universal twitter among the feathered tribes; and cock-robin, who was much offended by her inelegant flight and appearance, voted asking the owl for his judgment as to how she was to be got rid of, and prevented from ever again obtruding herself into their company.

The owl was fast asleep; but the chattering of the sparrows and chirping of the tits, loudest in the outcry, awoke him. He half opened one eye.

“One at a time, friends,” he said, nearly closing it again as the din increased. “I really can not pretend to understand more than one at a time.”

So the thrush, the blackbird, the tit, the sparrow, and various others, laid their complaints before him in succession. He blinked solemnly as he listened, and, when they had finished, said, —

“Friends, having been somewhat indecorously disturbed in my meditations at this my usual hour of rest, I am hardly in a capacity to adjudge your cause; but you shall have the best decision I can give.

“As I make out from the evidence, the cuckoo is

accused of neglect of home-duties ; of thieving in taking house-room to herself without paying for it ; of uselessness and idleness ; of thrusting her young on the care of others for support ; and of impudence in the midst of all her misdemeanors. In regard of home-duties, Mrs. Thrush, you are a pattern of mothers, and, respecting you as such, let me remind you, that, although she does not take care of her young in person, she puts them out to good nurses. As to thieving, I must say that Mr. Tit, who was first witness on this head, had his mouth so full of peas that he could hardly give evidence. For her uselessness, I have this much to say to you all, I heard the farmer tell his bailiff that he was welcome to shoot all and any of you (excepting the thrush, who lives upon snails and such things), but not to touch a feather of a cuckoo ; for she clears the trees of caterpillars and their eggs so as to save half the young things that are coming up from being devoured. As to thrusting her young on the public for support, I appeal to you all, if, while she is working for the public, she hasn't a right to that public's assistance.

As to beauty and elegance, there are so many opinions upon that subject, that I must decline answering to the objection; and, as to impudence" (and here he opened both his eyes, and looked at the sparrows), "I confess that I shall cease to be surprised at any thing, when I hear a charge like that brought by such proverbial offenders."

The exertion of delivering this harangue sent the owl fast asleep again; and as the birds, looking very foolish at one another, were dispersing to their several quarters, they heard the gray-bird crying, "Cuckoo! cuckoo!" They all felt a little ashamed of the bitterness of their previous hatred of one for whom so much good could be said.



MAKE THE BEST OF IT.

A HEDGEHOG and a tortoise lived together on amicable terms in a garden. One day the tortoise found the hedgehog very disconsolate under a hedge.

“What’s the matter?” he cried: “every thing is lively and bright; it is warm enough even for me; I’ve taken the trouble to walk all across the path on purpose to know why you sit sluggishly here in the shade, instead of rejoicing in this glorious sunshine.”

The hedgehog was for some time ashamed to tell; at last he confessed that he was jealous. “There is not a creature,” he said, “that is without friends but myself. The cat, who kills the birds and destroys the game, is petted and caressed. The dog, who, while he guards the sheep, often kills the lambs, is made one of the family. There’s not a bird nor a beast that I see around who doesn’t receive some kind of affection or admiration, however useless, or even mischievous it may be; but I, who am perfectly harmless, and most diligent in discharging the duties for which I am placed here, — I, against whom no single

charge can be laid, am looked on with disgust, or avoided."

"And you don't know why?" said the tortoise.

"No : do you?" said the hedgehog.

"Yes : I do," said the tortoise. "All that you say with regard to your moral character is true ; but, if you are aware of it, you have at least forgotten, that you are covered with prickles, which, though they don't interfere with your respectability, make you disagreeable company to all but such as I, who, being thick-skinned, feel no inconvenience from them. Be content, my friend, to live quietly and do your work unnoticed, remembering that, if your prickles keep you from the caresses received by pets, they also save you from the caprices which they often suffer. Dogs are hanged, and cats are drowned ; but who ever heard of any but a hungry gypsy killing a hedgehog?"



PREACHING AND PRACTICING.

“WELL! before I’d put up with *that!*” said Crummie, the cow, as she watched the boy putting a collar on Dobbin the cart-horse, that was about to be taken to plow. “The idea of a great creature like *you* submitting to a little fellow like that,—it’s quite contemptible!”

Quietly said the cart-horse, “He is very small, but very knowing; and I am not ashamed of being led and managed by him.”

“A poor spirit you must have, then,” said Crummie, jeeringly: “why, you might send him across the field with one kick.” She had hardly finished when Rover the dog came up to call the cow to milking. Finding Crummie inattentive, he ran barking and snapping at her legs.

“Oh, dear!” cried Crummie, and took to her heels, nearly upsetting Dobbin, who had just time to say, as she passed in her clumsy run, “Ha, ha! why don’t you kick him across the field? I’m sure you’re big enough; but that’s the way with your wise folk,

who can settle the nation, they think, but give way to the smallest difficulty that they happen to meet. She abused me for submitting to a superior nature, and yet runs before a yelping cur not a third of her size, and no better any way."

ABOVE THE CLOUD.

"MOTHER, mother!" cried the young larks in great distress. "Look at father; oh! he has gone now into that cloud, and we have lost him. O mother! why did he fly so high? why did he let the cloud swallow him up?"

"Foolish children!" answered the mother-bird, "he is safe enough; I can hear him singing even now; that cloud which looks so gloomy to you is dark only on the under side; he is above it, and sees a brighter, bluer sky than we do who are down here. Be content: he will return to us happier and wiser than he left us, and tell us, that, if he had not pierced that darkness, he would never have believed how much glory and beauty were above it."



THE OWL THAT WROTE A BOOK.

THE owl wrote a book to prove that the sun was not full of light; that the moon was in reality much more luminous; that past ages had been in a mistake about it, and the world was quite in the dark on the subject.

“What a wonderful book!” cried all the night-birds, “and it must be right: our lady, the owl, having such very large eyes, of course she can see through all the mists of ignorance.”

“Very true,” cried the bats: “she is right, no

doubt. As for us, as we can not see a blink, the moon and the sun are alike to us; and, for any thing we know, there is no light in either: so we go over in a body to her opinion."

And the matter was buzzed about till the eagle heard of it. He called the birds around him, and, looking down on them from his rocky throne, spoke thus:—

"Children of the light and of the day, beware of night-birds! Their eyes may be large, but they are so formed they can not receive the light, and what they can not see they deny the existence of. Let them praise moonlight in their haunts (they have never known any thing better); but let us who love the light, because our eyes can bear it, give glory to the great Fountain of it, and make our boast of the sun, while we pity the ignorance of poor moon-worshippers, and the sad lot of those who live in darkness!"



HOW DROVER GOT A DINNER.

"PRAY, ma'am, may I inquire what affects you?" said Drover to the black cat, that sat on the step of a back-kitchen door. You look melancholy."

Puss turned her head away, and made no answer.

"Nay, ma'am," said Drover, as courteously as any gentleman of high breeding, "I ask pardon for intruding; but I felt sorry for you, and thought a little sympathy might cheer you."

Puss hoped he would go; but seeing he stood still, and was bent on an answer, she turned half round, and rather superciliously assured him she was neither ill nor melancholy, and wanted neither pity nor company.

"Madam," said Drover respectfully, "allow me: you are depressed in spirits,—a state in which a true friend is invaluable. Open your heart to me: I may be so happy as to help to relieve you."

"I tell you," said the black cat, "I am not in want of a friend. I was just going to sleep when you came."

“How vexatious!” said Drover: “but that is a proof you are not well; for how could any one with an appetite go to sleep while that beautiful bone was close at hand?”

“Bone!” said the black cat, contemptuously turning to look at it: “I am not so fond of bones.”

“Not fond of bones! Well, that is surprising. I thought no one could resist a bone. As for *me*, I can only say that (next to meat) they are my favorite food; and I should esteem the owner of a bone like that a favorite of fortune.”

“It may be all well that a half-starved shepherd’s dog should think much of a bone; but for the favorite cat in an establishment like this to be put off with one is, in my opinion, a great slight; and, to tell you the truth, Mr. Drover, I feel it very much.”

“Well, ma’am,” said Drover, who had now got the cue to her ill-temper, “there is much truth in your remark, that circumstances alter cases; but, as to the facts you use to establish it, allow me to say I am not half-starved. There are times when I feed as well as any noble in the land.”

The black cat opened her eyes, and looked full at him.

“Yes, ma’am, in lambing-time I often have lamb for days together. My master, too, frequently brings home a dead sheep; and then I fare like a prince. Just now we are not in our high feed; but I get bits and scraps in sufficiency. This, I should say, is a mutton-bone?” he said inquiringly with an affectionate look at it.

“I don’t care what it is,” said the black cat: “our cook is dining on turkey, and she had no right to turn me out here with this bone, while she was enjoying herself in the kitchen.”

“A selfish trick, indeed, ma’am,” said Drover: “but no one is perfect; and, although she has failed in this instance, I should say cook is very good to you.”

“She does her duty: what is she for but to wait on the family?”

“True, ma’am,” said Drover, who saw that the black cat was beginning to give vent to some hidden grievance.

“And what if I did just look at the turkey when

it was hanging? Was I to be cuffed and turned out and made to starve on a bone for that?"

"Oh, sad, sad! Most unjustifiable severity!" said Drover; "and you only looked at the turkey?"

"Well, not much more: it wasn't my fault if the nail was loose, and it came down at a touch."

"Oh, certainly not. So it came down; of course you only touched it to see if *it would* come down?"

"Exactly that," said the black cat with animation.

"And when it *was* down?" said Drover, inquiringly.

"Why, I merely tried the head and neck. I assure you what I took was a mere trifle."

"No doubt," said Drover; "but I wonder you didn't try the breast: they say that is the finest eating."

"Yes: it is," said the black cat, licking her lips at the remembrance of it. "I *did* have a taste of it, I confess; but before I had had time for a mouthful came cook: and really you would have thought I had eaten the whole turkey, she said such things, and actually hunted me out of the larder with a rolling-pin."

"Cruel! cruel!" said Drover, his eyes fixed on the bone.

"She said, 'Who was going to eat things after a cat?'"

"Oh, what a narrow prejudice!" said Drover.

"She threatend to hang me."

"It makes one's heart ache to think of it," said Drover.

"I shan't forget it," said the cat.

"She is but a woman," said Drover.

"Oh, but she might know better! But I know how I'll spite her, — I won't eat her bones. I'll pine first; and, if *my* mistress and *hers* sees me thin and ill, I know who will be sorry for it."

"A very clever thought," said Drover with a quick glance at the bone. "Not that I would advocate retaliation; but, as you observe, it might be well to teach cook how to give way to unrighteous wrath; for, if she had not left the larder open, you would not have been able, you see, ma'am, to get at the turkey?"

"No," said the black cat indignantly.

“And then she had no right to use bad language, and cuff, and give you a poor dinner,—three punishments for what was merely an indiscretion committed through her inadvertency in leaving the door open.”

“Oh, I’ll starve to punish her!” said the black cat.

“I certainly would not eat the bone,” said Drover. “It would be encouraging her in her unjust oppression.”

“I won’t,” said the cat.

“No, don’t,” said Drover. And then, with as much indifference as he could assume, he added, “Shall I take it away?”

The black cat looked demurringly.

“Just as you please,” said Drover: “I thought it would be well for her to see your determination at once. Shall I?”—and he put one paw on the bone. She did not forbid; and, satisfied with that, he seized and ran off with it at once for fear she should change her mind; and no sooner was he gone than she began to repent. Cook left her to eat her bone, or go without till the next morning; and she was

obliged to sup on a mouse. Drover kept out of her way for a day or two; and it was long before she saw him without an uncomfortable conviction that he had got a joke against her, and robbed her of her dinner into the bargain.

Those who, under friendly guise, fan the flame of anger or pride or other temper, may be suspected of doing so with a bad and selfish motive. It was only for the bone that Drover descanted on the wrongs of puss and the tyranny of the cook.

THE THRUSH AND THE CATERPILLAR.

“CRUEL bird! barbarous abuser of superior strength! What! is there not enough to gratify thee on earth? Its precious fruits, so sweet, so abundant, are they not sufficient, but thou must destroy life to appease thine appetite? Ah! I rejoice,—the lark has risen beyond thy flight. He is hidden in yonder fleecy cloud, and thou returnest baffled, defeated. It is well!”

And the thrush, who had indignantly watched the hawk on its pursuit, nestled more closely over her young brood, comparing herself, greatly to her own advantage, with the bird of prey.

“Madam,” whispered a caterpillar from behind a leaf, “I beg to apologize; but allow me to say that I am rejoiced to hear your new view of things. You breakfasted this morning on an intimate friend of mine, and I have been keeping close ever since for fear you should lunch on *me*; but, after what you have said, my apprehensions must be groundless. You will, I am sure, henceforth confine yourself to vegetable diet.”

“Humph!” muttered the thrush: “awkward that; it never struck me that ‘people who live in glass houses should not throw stones.’”

We often learn the true character of our own deeds in observing what is done by others.



NOT A PIN TO CHOOSE.

“I WOULDN’T be a fish,” said a gull, as he ducked down for a small fry that lay on a well-filled net in a boat, and carried it off in his bill. “What with sharks and such gentry *in* the water, and nets and birds *out* of the water, I wonder there’s a fish left!”

“Fetch down that fellow,” said the captain. Pop! went the gun, down fell the gull; its broad wings flapping on the net in which still lay the captives of the deep.

“Vain was your boast, unhappy friend,” said an expiring cod: “neither the air nor sea can hide us from our doom. Time was when I rejoiced that I was not a bird to live so near our common enemy, man, as you did, and said, ‘I wonder there is a bird left in the air.’ But here we both are, confessing by experience that every lot has its dangers; and, if we are free from those that beset others, we had better look well to those that we are liable to, instead of pluming ourselves on our safety, if we mean to preserve it.”

KNOW YOUR FRIENDS.

"Oh, here come the swallows!" said the spring-flowers: "that is delightful!" They smiled at one another, and looked upward joyously, as the birds wheeled their flight in the bright sky.

"The swallows! The swallows!" said the little streams and brooks. "There's an end of ice and snow to chain us and block us up!" and they prattled and babbled, full of frolic, over their stony beds, making much of the birds as they dipped in their waters.

"Why do they ever leave us?" asked the flowers one of another, bending their little heads for a conference. "While they are here, all is happy and bright. Let us make a plan to keep them here all the year round."

"Why do they leave us?" said the brooks to the rills, and the rills to the small streams. "No frost, no snow! while they are with us. We will secure them, and keep a year of summer. Consult! Consult!" and there was a meeting of the waters.

Summer smiled on them. "Children," she said, "if you can lay a trap that will imprison *me*, and stay my departing, you may reckon safely on the swallows remaining. With me they come, with me they go. You owe them to me, not me to them."

HOW TO KNOW A GOOSE.

"MOTHER, mother!" cried a young rook, returning hurriedly from its first flight: "I'm so frightened! I've seen such a sight!"

"What sight, my son?" asked the old rook.

"Oh! white creatures, screaming and running, and straining their necks, and holding their heads ever so high. See! mother, there they go!"

"Geese, my son,—merely geese," calmly replied the parent-bird, looking over the common. "Through life, child, observe that when you meet any one who makes a great fuss about himself, and tries to lift his head higher than the rest of the world, you may set him down at once as a goose."

THE THREE COLORS.

THERE was a feud : red and blue and yellow stood in open defiance each of the other two.

“Acknowledge me chief!” said red. “I am ever the emblem of charity. All that is warm, and redolent of comfort and kindness, is arrayed in my tints. I rest on this rose, and claim precedence.”

“Acknowledge *me* chief!” said blue. “I am the emblem of truth. All that is high and pure and just wears my hue. I rise and shine from yonder sky, and claim precedence.”

“Acknowledge *me* chief!” said yellow. “I am the emblem of light and glory. Kings are crowned, palaces glitter, with my lustrous color. Receive me, O sun! to thee I call, and claim precedence.”

“Ah! my children,” said the sun, “the very heavens weep at your disunion. Be reconciled, I pray, and show your strength of beauty where it must ever lie, — in harmony.” And they rose at the entreaty, and embraced in the tearful clouds; and the

sun shone out on them, and glorious in loveliness was the rainbow they made.

SOMETHING FOR BOTH SIDES.

“How we are admired!” said the waters of a rushing cascade to the rocks over which they fell, as many standers-by exclaimed at their beauty.

“Whom do you mean by *we*?” asked the rocks.

“Whom? why, we waters, of course,” was the reply.

“Are you so foolish and vain?” asked the rocks frowning. “Can you not see that they who behold tremble before *us*? You are merely worthy of remark because you are a feature in the scene.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” shouted the waters, and rushed on, echoing the laugh from point to point. “Do you really think your rugged faces would charm any one unless adorned with our brilliancy?”

“Depart!” said the rocks, with terrible frown, “and leave us to stand alone; then we shall know to whom beauty and glory belong.”

"Let us leave them, and flow over yonder mead," said the waters. They did so; and the rocks were silent, and so was the flood of the fields. None came to gaze or to listen.

"Ah!" murmured the waters, "we should not have refused the rocks their share of honor. Truly they made us a thing of beauty."

"Brothers," said the rocks in hoarse echoes, "why did we drive away the waters? If we lent them our strength of form, they clothed us with their grace and splendor. Now, alas! *they* flow on in obscurity, and *we* are passed by unheeded and unpraised."

"MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

A DONKEY stood in a meditative attitude, with his white nose over the palings, switching away the flies with his tail.

"What are you thinking about, Ned?" said the gray mare, who was grazing in the next meadow.

"I know," cried the colt: "he's thinking of the

beating he got when he upset the apple-cart; I know it by his expression.”

“No, he isn’t,” said his friend, the foal: “he’s wishing he was in here with us; can’t you see his eyes?”

These remarks drew several horses which were “on tack” in the field to the spot; and each gave his own opinion as to the subject of Neddy’s lucubrations. At last, a cow, who was disturbed in her dinner by so much company coming to her chosen place, suggested, that as the public mind varied so considerably, and there was such difficulty in coming to a decision, it would be a good thing to ask Ned himself, who could soon end their perplexities. Immediately he was plied with questions, to which, after a few winks and a grave shake of his head, he replied, “Gentlemen, I beg to say I was thinking of nothing.”



“WHAT’S LAW FOR THEE IS LAW FOR ME.”

“I *hate* flies!” said a crop-eared mastiff as he lay basking in the sun one summer’s evening.

His companion, the house-dog, who had been dozing by his side, merely licked one off that had tickled his nose, and made no reply.

“I can’t see what use they are of,” said the mastiff.

“Can’t you?” said the house-dog, seeing he must answer before he could go to sleep again.

“No: can *you*?” said the mastiff, snapping angrily at two or three that buzzed in his face.

“Swallows like them,” said the house-dog, yawning, and flapping some off with his ears.

“Swallows, indeed! and what’s the use of swallows? Is all the world to be tormented with flies because swallows like them? They do nothing but play, and put the housemaid in a passion about the windows.”

“Why don’t you knock them off, as I do?” said the house-dog, flapping his ears again.

“I might if they’d left me my ears,” said the mastiff.

"Who cut them off?" asked the house-dog.

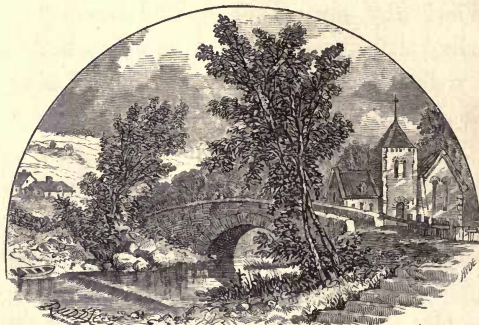
"Who? why, my master, when I was a pup. I wish he'd left them alone. I dare say he'd have made a fine to-do if anybody had cut off his."

"No doubt," said the house-dog, "he would have told them they were too useful to part with."

"And do you suppose mine were not meant to be as useful to me?" said the mastiff angrily.

"Doubtless that's your view; but, you see, it wasn't his. There's no accounting for the different opinions of people: if you, for instance, were to inquire of swallows and flies, you might hear that they were as necessary in the places they occupy as you would find your ears at this present moment."





THE BROOK.

“BROOK, bright and gladsome brook ! I pray thee stay awhile: I love to see my moss-grown face in thy clear waters.”

It was an ancient bridge, with many-colored lichens on its crumbling stone, that cried thus to the brook.

“Nay,” said the brook, “I can not tarry: my river is far off, and I must not rest till I find it.”

“Brook, dear, beautiful brook, stay and sing to us

while we dance," said a group of daffodils, that were trembling with delight in the summer breeze.

"Dance ye, and play," said the brook; "but I tarry not. As I sing I flow onwards, for my river is far off; and I may not stay till I gain it."

"Brook, what song do you sing? How is it that you fear not to break our sacred silence? Remember the tale of quietness we tell, and cease your gay prattling."

Thus spake some old gray tombstones, that rose above the churchyard wall, and frowned darkly on the silver brook as it glittered in the moonlight.

"Nay, I can not be silent. My song is given me, and my voice is made to sing it; and I must not leave it off till I have gained my river." Thus answered the brook.

"Pretty brook, thou art not wide enough," said the moon. "Spread thyself over thy narrow banks, that I may rejoice more in thee, and thou mayest reflect more of my mild splendor."

"Pleasant moon," answered the brook, "I can not be more than I am, neither can I have more of thy

brightness yet; but my banks will be wide indeed, and my glory great indeed, when I have reached my river."

"Presumptuous brook!" said the sun, "dry up. What! wilt thou dare to steal my splendor to dress thy poor thread-like course? Dry up and perish!"

"Nay, by your leave, mighty sun, I will flow on under rushes, and hide from your scorn, and so reach my river."

And the brook *did* reach its river; for it was like the strong heart that neither trial nor temptation can hold in its hands.

AN AWKWARD QUESTION.

"A FINE day, sir," said Drover to a dog that had come over with an Irish reaper.

"Where will you find it?" said the stranger. "It's little enough of fine days that I've seen since I've been in this country."

"Mr. Drover has never been traveling, you see,"

said a Scotch terrier; "and isn't knowing in any weather but English."

"I pity him," said the stranger, "if he's never seen the beautiful clear sky of old Ireland, where the sun shines all the day long all the year round."

"Well, for clear skies," says the terrier, "give me bonnie Scotland, where the mists make such beautiful contrasts that a heap of brightness comes doubly delightful."

Drover trotted on in the middle.

"I'm sorry our sky doesn't please you, gentlemen," he said; "but, at any rate, you won't find fault with the earth. How pleasant and fruitful all around us is!"

"Pleasant!" said the Irish dog. "Oh! but it's the green island that's pleasant; and for fruitfulness, where is yours compared with hers? Why, I haven't seen green grass since I left her, though I've looked for it all the way."

"And think of the oatmeal that comes from us!" said the terrier; "and isn't whisky made from the very sod beneath your feet? And then the pleasant heather: oh, how I long for it!"

“Well,” said Drover, still trotting on between them, “what do you say to yon pretty brook so bright and so clear, and winding in and out among the fields, so that one never wants water long on the hottest day: I suppose you’ve nothing better than that?”

“Is it water you speak of?” said the Irish dog. “Well, then, you’ve never heard of the lakes and streams and the rivers that cover my country, and make it the delight of the whole earth?”

“No; nor of our lakes and our streams and our rivers,” said the terrier. “The very thought of them fills my heart with admiration.”

“Gentlemen,” said Drover, turning round, “allow me to ask, if we have no sky, no earth, and no water worth looking at, and you have such excellent ones at home, what made you leave them? and what brought you here?”



THE WORTH OF OPINION.

"IS'NT this charming?" said the ducks, one to another, as they sailed about in the high flood that laid the fields under water. "What a pity it isn't always so!" cried one. "I don't see why it shouldn't be!" said another: "I'm sure it's much prettier to look at, and a great deal more convenient."

"Very fine for you!" said a disconsolate cock that was strutting up and down a boundary-wall near; "very fine for you who think only of yourselves, while we are all penned up in the yard, and dare not venture a foot out for fear of being drowned; but it's always the way with selfish people."

"The beauty of a flood, my dear," said a blackbird to his mate, "is, that the ground will be so tender, and provision so abundant, we may count on a delightful pic-nic as soon as the water is gone down."

"Alas!" trilled the skylark as it hovered over the watery waste; "my home! my dear, my beautiful home! While I was caroling my joyous melody

beyond the clouds, the cruel waters flowed out, and I looked down in vain for my home!"

"Neighbor," said an old rook that was swinging backward and forward on the elm-tree top, "how can you account for all these different opinions? and what decision should you come to as to whether the flood is good or bad?"

"The flood is good for ducks and blackbirds, and bad for poultry and skylarks," replied his sage neighbor. "As to the difference of opinion, that is easily accounted for: people approve or disapprove of things not according to their merits, but as they affect their own interests!"

"HOME, SWEET HOME!"

"How fair I am," said a golden wallflower, whose broad, bright blossom rejoiced, in all the royalty of freedom, on the gray wall of an ancient ruin. And the wind sighed through the ivy-covered galleries, and said, "You are very fair!"

"Why am I here?" said the wallflower, "the only beautiful thing; why am I not in company with those whose fragrance and whose charms mine equal or excel?"

"Alas!" sighed the wind, and the listening ivy-leaves trembled around, "would you leave your native home, and the friends of your youth? Here the wild bees seek you, here the birds sing around you, here you shine as a star in our somber solitude."

But the traveler had gathered a blossom, and carried it away as a choice relic; and the wallflower was no longer satisfied with the homage of the bee, the admiration of the birds, or the friendship of the wind.

"Bear me!" she said, "bear me to another soil worthy of my grace, and let me no longer pine unseen in this mournful place!"

And the traveler came again, and tore the wallflower from the wall, and carried it away, and planted it in his own rich garden among flowers of rare cost and culture; and now she learned the truth.

"Who is this?" said one. "What is this?" said

another. "Have the weeds of the field presumed to enter our ranks?"

In vain the poor wallflower opened wide her blossoms, their gold was dimmed by the hues of her proud companions; and her perfume was lost in the powerful scents exhaled by those around her.

"Ah! my ruin, my home, my old gray wall!" she exclaimed. "Ah, gentle breeze! ah, joyful birds! and ah, the voice of friendship!—what have I exchanged you for?" And so she mourned until she withered, and was cast away.

But another grew up in her place on the old gray wall; and, in the summer evenings, the wind would whisper the sad story of her predecessor's fate, and entreat her to be content to reign as a queen in the ruin.



BAD TILLAGE.

THE husbandman complained that the fields were bare, the crops evil and scanty.

"Why is it thus?" he asked. "The fields are as they ever were,—no worse, neither more sterile, corrupt, nor stony than of old time. The seed is as good as the seed of other days: the same earth, the same seed. Why not the same harvest?"

Then the laborers were silent, and the husbandman was grieved and angry; and he said, "It is the *tillage* that is faulty. Look to it! of you I require it."

NOT THE FAULT OF THE TRUMPET.

"You are a poor, uncertain thing after all," said the drum to the trumpet. "Sometimes you make a fine sound, so that you can set an army in action, and inspire them to victory; at others you give forth such faint and trembling notes, that, if the hearers don't go to sleep, it's a wonder. Oh, you are a poor, uncertain thing!"

“Blame me not,” said the trumpet. “*I* am ever the same. The music I *can* make is not always called forth, indeed; but the blame is on the mouth that pretends to sound me, without having knowledge, strength, or experience to do it.”

A LIVING DOG BETTER THAN A DEAD LION.

THERE was a lion's image carved in stone, fierce and terrible. It frowned and looked sternly as it crouched before the palace gate.

“Is he not great, mighty, and awful?” asked one who stood by, of a poor low-bred dog that looked, but unconcernedly, on the image.

“He represents what is great, indeed,” answered the dog, “and, if he were alive, I should be terribly afraid of him; but as he is not alive, and I am, though I am but a poor contemptible dog, I consider that I am more to be envied and respected of the two; for what is a fine outside show, pray, if it's ever so fine, without any life within?”

BEWARE OF THE FOWLER.

“WHITHER so fast?” said a dove to a bird flying swiftly onward. “Turn, I pray you, and rest on this bough: your eyes are dull, your plumage is ruffled, and your wings, I see, are weary.”

“I dare not, I dare not!” answered the fluttering bird: “I go to my mate and my young ones, to my friends and my neighbors, to warn them and save them from what I have escaped.”

“What will you warn them against? What have you escaped?” asked the dove.

“I will warn them from the net of the fowler; for *that* have I but now escaped,” said the trembling bird.

“Oh, terrible! And what was it like?” asked the dove.

“It was spread among flowers, and fair grain lay on it; and I thought it was a pleasant place, and that I might revel in abundance: and I flew toward it, and should have entered, had not a kite hovering above alarmed me. I was angry with the kite, and

bitterly I reproached him in my heart ; but, before I had turned my wing, I saw the net drawn up and all within it made captive."

"But now you are safe, the danger is far away : why not rest by my side?"

"*I am safe, but my mate and my young ones, my friends and my neighbors, they must be warned : I hasten to tell them.*"

"I see not why so much speed is needful. I see not why you should tremble now that the danger is past ; why your heart should still beat fast, and your foot can not rest until you have told your story."

"Ah, poor dove!" cried the bird : "it is plain you have never felt what I feel. You may indeed have been near the net ; but you did not know it, nor fear it. Remember me, and beware!"

"Oh ! I am not going near danger, believe me," said the dove innocently.

"Alas ! we know not when that is near, nor where the net is not spread. The toils are so artful, the meshes so hidden, you would never suspect your danger. Keep, I pray you, to the dovecote and the

food there provided, and not let your eye rove after strange food, even if it is good, and lies among flowers !”

The dove looked after the bird as he hastened away ; and though he had heard his words, and seen his earnestness, he wondered at his determined flight. But the bird, as he sped onward, had the terrible net in his eye and on his heart, and rested not until he had gained his home, and charged his mate and his young ones, his friends and his neighbors, to beware of the fowler.





THE WILLOW-STUMP AND THE FINGER-POST.

“How wise I am!” cried the finger-post to a willow-stump by his side.

“Are you?” said the willow.

“Am I?” indignantly retorted the post. “Do you

see my arms? Are not the name of the great town, the road to it, and the distance from it, plainly written there?"

"Ah, yes!" said the willow.

"Then you must acknowledge how superior I am to you. Why! I am a public teacher."

"True, indeed," answered the willow, "and learned you are; but, as to wisdom, I see little difference between you and me. You know the way to the city, I believe, and are the means of enabling many to find it; but here you have stood these twenty years, and I don't see that you have got a step farther on the road than I have, who don't profess to understand any thing about it."



THE WAY TO CONQUER.

"I'll master it," said the axe; and his blows fell heavily on the iron; but every blow made his edge more blunt, till he ceased to strike.

"Leave it to me," said the saw; and with his relentless teeth he worked backwards and forwards on its surface till they were all worn down or broken: then he fell aside.

"Ha, ha!" said the hammer, "I knew you wouldn't succeed: *I'll* show you the way;" but at his first fierce stroke off flew his head, and the iron remained as before.

"Shall *I* try?" asked the soft, small flame. They all despised the flame; but he curled gently round the iron, and embraced it, and never left it till it melted under his irresistible influence.

There are hearts hard enough to resist the force of wrath, the malice of persecution, and the fury of pride, so as to make their acts recoil on their adversaries; but there is a power stronger than any of these, and hard indeed is that heart that can resist love.

BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES.

"How stupid you look, always staring straight up into the sky! what can you see there?" asked the buttercups of the daisies.

"See? oh! we see the sun in his strength, and the glories of day, and the soft summer clouds, and the grand thunder-storms, and wonders and beauties beyond description," answered the daisies.

"But you are stiff-necked by it, and all the fields laugh at you," said the buttercups.

"We don't mind about it," said the daisies.

"What poor, mean-looking things the cardamines are! Don't you think so?" asked the buttercups.

"Are they?" asked the daisies in reply.

"Shocking! but it would be better to be like *them* than those clumsy clover-blossoms, don't you think so?" asked the buttercups.

"Can't say, indeed," replied the daisies.

"As to those flaunting champions, well! they *are* bold, standing so tall and holding their heads so high: wouldn't you be ashamed to be like them?"

“Friends,” said the daisies, “be advised: it may seem stupid to be always staring at the sky; but it is very plain, that if you would follow our example, and do it, you would escape seeing much that disquiets you now,—an escape bought cheaply, even at the cost of a stiff neck and a little contempt.”

HOW CAN THE BLIND SEE?

A COMPANY of blind men sat talking together, seeming well satisfied with their discourse.

“The world is square,” said one.

“No doubt,” said another.

“And grass, — let me consider, — grass is *red*,” said a third.

“Certainly,” cried a fourth.

“And there is darkness always,” said a fifth.

“There can be no question about that,” chimed in a sixth.

And so they went on, making wonderful mistakes, and agreeing with one another most cordially.

But suddenly one of them gained his sight, and he saw that the world was round, the grass was green, and that it was light wherever the sun shone. So he ran to tell his friends.

"Oh, sirs, we were in a strange mistake when we settled all those things, I assure you! It arose from our being blind. *I* can see now, and wish you to profit by my experience."

"Do but hear him!" said one.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed another.

"Conceited knave!" cried a third.

"Impudent impostor!" said a fourth.

"Poor deluded fellow!" said a fifth.

"All cant!" said a sixth.

"Would you believe it?" said the astonished man to one who, like himself, could see.

"Believe it!" was the answer; "certainly: I expected no other. If you want them to believe *you*, you must see about getting them eyes for themselves: they can't see out of *yours*. You forget what you were when you were blind."

WHERE TO BEG AND PROSPER.

Two beggars met one day, and thus they talked as they rested on the road-side: —

“Ours is but a poor trade: I am getting very tired of it,” said one.

“Are you? Well, it is not so with me. I find it a prosperous business, and like it better every day,” said the other.

“Strange enough that!” was the answer. “There are so many things against us! First of all, one dares not to go to the same person too often.”

“That’s not my experience,” said the other. “I find that the oftener I go, the more readily I am heard.”

“You don’t say so!” exclaimed his companion. “I get turned away with ‘saucy fellow!’ or some such name, and am told to take my tale elsewhere. As to money or bread, I may knock pretty often before I get a sight of it.”

“Now, I can truly say,” said his companion, “that

if I don't get what I ask for, I have something better instead of it."

"A lucky fellow you are ; and in these times, too, when people shake their heads, and declare they have need to go begging themselves !"

"Ah ! that *I* am never told. I go where riches abound, and where there is enough, and *more* than enough, for all that ask."

"If I put on a doleful face, they call me hypocrite ; if I put on a merry air, they say I am not in want : there is no knowing how to succeed with them."

"When I am in trouble, I get pity : when I am full of praise and joy, I get a more abundant blessing."

"Wonderful ! wonderful ! They grow tired of my story, I find, before they have half heard it, and suspect it is false without caring much for me even if it were true."

"How contrary my case ! I can not tell my sorrows and wants too often : I am told to come with every one of them ; and, strange to say, so deep is the interest in my behalf, that what I have to tell is

better known at the house where I beg than I know it myself."

"Why, what house do you beg at?" asked the astonished beggar.

"At the gate of heaven," said his companion.
"Where do *you* beg?"

"Oh! *I* beg of the world," said he.

"Then no wonder you are tired of your trade. Come and try my gate. If you make your stand at that you will never be disappointed, never get an angry or unkind word, and never, *never* be turned empty away."



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